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Marxism Today

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A. L. LLOYD	THE FOLK-SONG REVIVAL
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Marxism Today

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Editorial Comments

ONE of the dogmas of the "welfare state" propagandists is that both income and wealth in Britain are much more evenly distributed than ever before. The big fortunes, we are told, have been dispersed. Yet there is probably no assertion on any social question that is less backed by evidence.

In the February issue of the Bulletin of the Oxford University Institute of Statistics, Messrs. H. F. Lydall and D. G. Tipping have a study on *The Distribution of Personal Wealth in Britain* which sets out to explore this question. The authors admit that:

> "despite the various attempts that have been made to discover the facts about the distribution of capital in Britain, the most striking aspect is the statistical darkness which surrounds it. In this respect Britain is no worse than most other countries (the main exceptions are the Scandinavian countries) *but it is nevertheless remarkable that a subject which is of the importance indicated above has so far been kept so much a mystery*" (our italics).

There is, in fact, nothing remarkable about it when one remembers that the rich have an interest in concealing the facts, while the right-wing Labour leadership, sold on the idea that there has been a really extensive redistribution of income and capital, do not seem too eager to probe into the real situation.

Some clues as to the distribution of capital are to be found in the estate duty statistics but even these have to be carefully interpreted. The head of a rich family, for example, no longer holds his fortune in his own direct possession, up until he dies. He disperses it amongst members of his family during his lifetime, and as the authors point out, there are no statistics on capital distribution between families. So it is possible for the distribution of capital between persons to appear to be more egalitarian while the distribution between families remains unchanged.

The results of the authors' research are as follows: The top 1 per cent of people owned 56 per cent of personal capital in 1936 and 42 per cent in 1951-6. The top 5 per cent owned 81 per cent in 1936 and 67.5 per cent in 1951-6. The top 10 per cent owned 88 per cent in 1936 and 79 per cent in 1951-6. These figures suggest that while there has been some redistribution of capital within the monopolists, there has been little distribution outside them to other sections of the population. The share of the top 10 per cent in the personal capital of the country only dropped from 88 per cent to 79 per cent in the years from 1936 to 1956 and some concealment will almost certainly operate here.

When the age groups of those owning more than £2,000 are explored it is found that the greatest concentration is in the group below forty-five years of age, rather than in the older age groups, as might have been expected. The authors say "presumably this difference is largely the result of deliberate redistribution of very large fortunes by older people in anticipation of death". At the other end of the scale, amongst the 90 per cent of the population, 21 per cent of personal capital is owned. Cash in bank and ownership of houses and small businesses appears to be the largest slice. Only 2.5 per cent of the bottom 90 per cent of the people seem to own stocks and shares. The authors consider that the distribution of capital in Britain is more unequal than in the United States. "Top people's capitalism" in fact.

Tinpot Machiavelli

There is a lot of Tinpot Machiavellism about these days. There is the labour correspondent in *The Times Review of Industry* for May giving the employers some advice on how to blunt the edge of the wages movement:

> "However painful it may be for employers to recognise that the unions still have the upper hand in a wide range of industries, when it comes to bargaining this must be faced, with its corollary that the unions' power, where it is strong, can be reduced in only three ways: *economically* by reducing the number of jobs available; *legally*, by forbidding strikes and the closed shop; or *psychologically*, by enlisting their co-operation.
>
> "The economic method implies either restrictions on output which hurt the employer as much as the union, or labour-saving innovations, which are often impossible without union co-operation, legal prohibition of strikes has been found unworkable, and to prevent closed shops would be equally difficult."

So the worldly wise labour correspondent recommends the psychological method of reducing the unions' power as follows:

> "There remains the dry wisdom of the slogan 'if you can't beat 'em, join 'em'. This, broadly, is what the motor manufacturers have approached cautiously in their talks with the unions at the Ministry; what the British Transport Commission has in mind with their proposals for working parties to see how hours can be reduced, and what the National Coal Board have now practised so long with the miners that only die-hard Communists in Wales and Scotland still resist."

There you are, trade unionists. When you ask for increased wages and the boss says "Yes, provided you agree to work-study", or "Yes, provided you agree to a working party to discover ways and means of increasing productivity", he is operating the

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"psychological method" of reducing the power of the unions. *You have been warned.*

The Long Revolution

Has the *Financial Times* been reading the declaration of the Eighty-One Communist Parties, adopted in Moscow last November? If not, from whence came the burst of enlightenment which illuminated its editorial columns on April 25th? An editorial entitled "From China to Peru" contains a number of bright thoughts which will be appreciated in circles far removed from the Stock Exchange punters who are its devoted readers. Apropos of the generals' revolt in Algiers and the defeat of the American-sponsored invasion of Cuba the Pink 'Un said:

> "The world is in ferment. The great part of its population is at present clamouring for political independence, or more rapid progress towards tolerable standards of life. The perennial struggle between haves and have-nots, between those who desire change and those who oppose it, is now being conducted fiercely almost everywhere at once; and it is being conducted in such a glare of international publicity that events in one country can have an important influence on the events in another. What happens in Cuba and Algeria is now of interest to all underdeveloped countries and to the balance of power between East and West."

Not bad, my financial friends. "The perennial struggle between haves and have-nots" is not quite so good as "the history of all hitherto existing society [outside primitive communism] is the history of class struggles", but it will do.

> "Unrest in Asia springs from the results of an exploding population. India's massive development plan is barely staving off social upheaval and a political settlement in Laos will not settle the problems of South-East Asia."

Of course, the *Financial Times* omits to say that the population is exploding against the framework of imperialist exploitation, which prevents expanding population from being accompanied by extensive, independent, national economic development. Having outlined the situation in Africa and Latin America the editorial proceeds:

> "The West, with occasional failures, is now reconciled to the wind of change. But for a variety of reasons, some altruistic, some frankly self-interested, it often wishes to moderate its speed."

What are the self-interested reasons? Could they have anything to do with the vast oil, mining and plantation profits extracted from these regions and from the extremely unequal terms of trade existing between the monopoly capitalist states and the colonial or ex-colonial countries?

> "The East, for its part, has every reason to encourage the speed of a political and social revolution which it is convinced will be to its own ultimate advantage and it is to the East that the extremists tend naturally to look for support. Those who have had to fight or are still fighting for independence or social reform cannot afford Fabian tactics."

declares the editorial, which then proceeds to offer some rude shelter against the wind of change.

> "The West, rather than be tempted into an ideological struggle, must learn the trick of adapting itself continuously to changing circumstances, and it must learn that it is time to work for long-term objectives rather than be carried away by anxiety to score propaganda points or protect its own short-term interests."

Oh wise old serpent! But while you may induce the monopoly capitalists not to be too anxious to score propaganda points (what points could they score anyhow in an ex-colony which has suffered from *their oppression and is still suffering from their exploitation?*) we doubt if it will induce the monopolists not to be so anxious to protect their "short-term interests".

However, most ordinary folk will take heart from the concluding statement: "A large part of the world's population is going through or about to go through a long revolution. The world will probably be filled with change and violence for years to come. We must learn to live with it." The last sentence may satisfy the Stock Exchange but not the progressive people of Britain whose standpoint must be: "We are an important part of this revolution. We must learn to help it and to change the world with it."

The Communist Ideal

When the *Financial Times* begins to paraphrase *The Communist Manifesto* almost anything can happen. Another interesting reflection of the new relation of forces in our contemporary world is the growing admission by capitalist spokesmen of the power of communist ideas and communist ideals.

Take, for instance, the *Guardian*. It was strongly critical of the recent American-backed invasion of Cuba, not for reasons of principle, nor of ethics, but for more sordid practical purposes. In these days, the *Guardian* considered, this is *not* the right way to fight communism. Gunboat diplomacy may have been a useful method in the past, but it will not take a trick today. Then it proceeds to its interesting admission:

> "Communism is not a plague, like the Colorado beetle, to be stamped out by force. Communism is an idea: one of the most plausible and persuasive ideas in human history . . . but the danger the West now faces in Latin America and Africa is not that of direct Soviet intervention, nor even that of a Communist conspiracy by stealth. The real danger is that Latin Americans and Africans may decide by their own free will that the Communist picture of the world is more truthful and more promising than the West's. If that should happen, then the

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> West would indeed by condemned—for in the last resort. no power on earth can withstand an idea" (*The Guardian*, April 26th, 1961).

Splendid. If communism is an idea and "no power on earth can withstand an idea"—why not accept Khrushchov's invitation to disarm and to engage in peaceful competition in ideas and example?

But, the *Guardian* will have none of this. It is amongst the most bitter anti-Soviet journals in Britain. As to alternative ideas to communism, it remains discreetly silent. What positive ideas, comparable in truth, persuasiveness, power, can it offer to communism? A rehash of tattered Manchester "liberalism"? Its sole ideological stock-in-trade is barren, negative anti-communism.

Perhaps even more interesting is the emergence of Lord Hailsham, Minister of Science in the Tory Government, as a prophet of the future. Looking ahead, he sees capitalism developing into a "classless society". Addressing the Grand Habitation of the Primrose League on April 28th of this year, he stated that by 1984 (the year chosen because of George Orwell's slander of socialism in the novel of that name) the average wage of the male worker will amount to £2,000 per annum, and in Britain:

> "There will be no more proletariat. The communist ideal, classless society, will have been largely realised. The working population will be mainly the products of the grammar school, the university and the technical institute."

We thank Lord Hailsham for his admission on the nature of communist ideals. But we would like, gently, to point out that before "there will be no more proletariat" there must be no more bourgeoisie, no more monopoly capitalists, no more big landlords, no more Stock Exchange, and above all, no more Tory rule over Britain. Political power must pass into the hands of the working class, and the Ministry of Science into the hands of ministers who have a scientific, socialist, understanding of society.

Still More Admissions

The Communists, Lord Hailsham admits, are working for a society where not just a privileged minority, but where the whole people, receive advanced education, where, in *his* words: "the working population will be mainly the product of the grammar school, the university and the technical institute". Let us turn now, in this context, to another interesting set of admissions.

Bulletin No. 17 of the Office of Education of the American Department of Health, Education and Welfare (1960) contains a detailed report on *Soviet Education Programs* produced by three well-known American educationalists—William K. Medlin, Specialist in Comparative Education for Eastern Europe, Clarence B. Lindquist, Chief for Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Division of Higher Education, and Marshall L. Schmitt, Specialist for Industrial Arts Division of State and Local School Systems. They have prepared this booklet of over 200 pages following an extended visit to the Soviet Union.

From *their* observations we see that this conception of spreading a high level of education to the mass of the working people is *already* beginning to take shape in the Soviet Union. Summing up their impressions they write:

> "Building on modest but strong foundations, educators in the Soviet Union have erected, in little more than one generation, a system of mass education. Soviet general education is a vigorous, dynamic institution . . . the outstanding feature is its trend in recent years towards offering complete secondary education on a mass basis and with a dual purpose —academic and polytechnic."

Though critical on many issues, these American educationalists were particularly impressed by the development of Soviet polytechnical education. The overall aim of such education, they write, is: "to give an all-round general education, while production training is a supplementary aim". The new polytechnical curriculum, they add, "if fully implemented, will give the Soviet general schools a technical-work experience programme not before attempted by schools of a modern industrial nation on such a vast scale".

For a National Theatre

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has refused to release the million pounds earmarked for a National Theatre building. Once more, Britain, which seemed about to take its place alongside other European countries in this respect, is being held back on the cultural field. With this refusal, the Tory Government makes clear its attitude to the arts in general, and the theatre in particular. To them, theatre is a pleasant adjunct to life which those may indulge in who wish to and can afford it. They do not consider it to be a national asset or an expression of the life of the nation. As Mr. Felix Aylmer, President of British Actors' Equity said at their annual general meeting: "The Government is determined to preserve our reputation as a nation of shopkeepers."

It is not to be supposed that a Government which allows the swallowing up of our national newspapers in a giant merger and puts no brake on the Clore monopolies could recognise that aspect of our nation's characteristics which is embodied in the art of the theatre. Endless millions may be poured out on nuclear tests, but not one is to be available for a National Theatre. And this, ironically enough, is the point of view of a party which repeatedly decries the "materialistic" philosophy of communism and of the socialist countries.

The London County Council, in which Labour has control, has made a generous offer. If the Govern-

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ment will hand over the million pounds to them they will build the National Theatre on the site reserved for it and themselves supply the extra money for its construction and maintenance.

It is interesting that the unofficial statement put by the Conservative Political Centre in an election pamphlet which they called "A Contribution to Discussion" declared that support to British drama should be given official recognition by the erection of a National Theatre. Yet the election over, the Tory Chancellor of the Exchequer refuses, precisely, to do just that. If Britain is to keep its rightful place in European culture, demonstrating to the world that it has a heritage of dramatic literature, and a tradition of acting second to none, it is clearly necessary, as quickly as possible, to get rid of the Tory Government.

Advertising's Black Monday

May Day was Black Monday for the advertising industry, especially that part which uses the medium of commercial TV—and the reason had nothing to do with the B.B.C.'s magnificent live transmission of the Moscow May Day parade. On that day the Chancellor of the Exchequer's 10 per cent tax on TV advertising came into force. The advertising fraternity certainly did not see the joke of Selwyn Lloyd, the prime architect of commercial TV, being the man to initiate this tax. On the radio Mary Stocks described it as "The Lloyd giveth, and The Lloyd taketh away", but the major TV programme contractors are unlikely to be greatly affected, as, for the most part, the tax is being passed on directly to the advertisers and their agents; four contractors have taken the opportunity of reducing their rates for transmission of commercials, some by 10 per cent, others by 5 per cent, so cushioning the effect of the tax. The new excise duty does not apply to Ulster Television, being in Northern Ireland.

Fear and uncertainty followed in the wake of this section of the Budget proposals; technicians working for the programme contractors sought through their union an assurance from their employers that the tax would not result in a decrease in expenditure on programmes—so often in the past have the workers detected a readiness by the contractors to give the viewers anything, so long as the profits were not affected; the advertising agencies feared that this tax was the thin end of the wedge of taxes on other forms of advertising, and there has been a tendency to blame the boastfulness of some contractors about the profits they make, as this may have "invited" the tax.

To the Chancellor and to Customs and Excise, who have the job of getting in the tax, the TV tax is money for jam. Unlike the old entertainment tax, which had to be collected through thousands of cinemas and theatres, only a handful of companies —the TV programme contractors—will do the collecting. Selwyn Lloyd in his Budget speech estimated netting £7 million this year, and £8,500,000 in a full year. TV is the expanding medium of entertainment these days, so the Chancellors of the Exchequer would argue here is a good source of money, now that the cinema, theatre, concert and other forms of entertainment no longer can bear the tax burden.

Liberated African States and Socialism

Number 5 of *The African Communist*, published by the South African Communist Party, contains among other interesting articles, one by N. Numadé, on "The Choice Before New Africa". The author, discussing imperialist propaganda about the "Communist menace", points out that the drive towards socialism in Africa arises "not from some remote 'game' of power-politics in foreign countries, but out of the urgent needs and bitter experiences of the African peoples themselves".

The continued exploitation of African resources and cheap labour by "neo-colonialism" or "collective imperialism" bars the way to industrialisation, which is essential for rapidly modernising Africa and raising the living standards of the people. That is why the liberation movement, after political independence has been won, must increasingly develop in a democratic, anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist direction.

The African Communist can be obtained from its London agent: Mr. Ellis Bowles, 52 Palmerston Road, East Sheen, London, S.W.14. The subscription is 6s. a year (four issues).

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The Cuban Revolution[1]

Blas Roca

IN presenting here a short balance sheet of the development of the Cuban Revolution, it is well to recall some of its essential characteristics which we have emphasised since the first days of January 1959.

The first and most outstanding characteristic of the Cuban Revolution is that the struggle of the Revolutionary Army was the main and decisive means of achieving the defeat of the pro-imperialist Batista tyranny. The other means and forms of struggle employed by the masses of the workers, peasants, white-collar workers, professionals, students, in city and country, outside of the area of the armed struggle, played an auxiliary role to the armed struggle and contributed to the victory of January 1st. The general strike which followed on January 1st, in spite of what has been said, was decisive to the completion of the victory, since it defeated the attempts to replace the tyranny with a compromise government and enabled the revolutionary forces to occupy the military fortresses in Havana without firing a shot.

The fact that the armed struggle was the principal and decisive means of overthrowing the tyranny was of great importance to the speed of development of the revolution, since it made possible the disbandment of the armed forces of the tyranny, officers and men, as well as professional troops, and likewise the building up of new armed forces with a new spirit and outlook, with the revolutionary forces of the People's Revolutionary Army as the main nucleus.

The existence of a new revolutionary, armed force, right from the outset, composed primarily of armed peasants and workers, enabled the revolution to advance with a speed and assurance otherwise impossible.

The fact that the armed struggle was the main means of action of the Cuban people for overthrowing the tyranny has shown in practice that guerrillas can become in the course of a long fight a people's revolutionary army and smash the professional army, trained and supplied by the Yankee imperialists.

This is possible because the People's Revolutionary Army can and does receive the support of the peasants, the workers and the whole people, whereas the professional, reactionary, and pro-imperialist army acting in the service of tyrannical and reactionary governments, foreign companies and latifundists (big semi-feudal landlords), earns the determined opposition of the whole people, the peasants and the workers. This general hostility, as well as the spectacle of the robbery, abuse and corruption, practised by the high officials and the Government, broke down the ranks of this army and facilitated its defeat by the People's Revolutionary Army.

The second outstanding characteristic of the Cuban Revolution is that it did not limit itself to a change of persons, parties, or social forces in the top ranks of power; did not limit itself to taking possession of the state machinery, but destroyed the whole governmental apparatus of the tyranny.

Batista, the "executive power", his ministers, his military chiefs and top-ranking police officials fled on the early morning of January 1st.

The Congress was dissolved and its principal Batista representatives took the road of exile and conspiracy. The civil authorities, both provincial and municipal, were removed, without exception, throughout the whole country.

All the political parties which supported Batista or collaborated with him were dissolved and their representatives, senators, mayors, councilmen and governors, prohibited for thirty years from holding any public office or exercising their electoral rights. The officials and members of the army, the police and the special organs of political repression which had committed or ordered assassinations, were arrested, brought to trial, and shot or sentenced to prison.

The American military mission, which advised and trained the army and organised the espionage services and the political police, was dismissed from its functions and expelled from the country.

All the repressive, reactionary and anti-communist legislation was repealed and the apparatuses responsible for enforcing it were dissolved—such as the Military Intelligence Service, the Bureau of Repression of Communist Activities, etc.

The trade union leadership, imposed and maintained by the tyranny in the Cuban Confederation of Labor, its federations and unions—who were agents and lackeys of the reactionary Government and of imperialism, who opposed the revolution and devoted themselves to breaking strikes, robbing, and blackmailing and corrupting the workers—were removed, and they and their associates prohibited from holding trade union posts.

There remained intact from the old semi-colonial, semi-feudal landlord regime only the judicial apparatus, the Supreme Court and subordinate courts.

[1]Extracts from the report made by Blas Roca, General Secretary of the Popular Socialist Party of Cuba, to the National Congress of the Party in August 1960.

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However, for judging the war criminals and counter-revolutionary crimes, special courts were set up, not subject to the jurisdiction of the so-called judicial power which was anachronistic and dying.

New State Institutions

In place of the old destroyed apparatus of power, the revolution has built and continues to build new institutions. The Council of Ministers of the Revolutionary Government and the President assumed the executive power as well as the legislative and the constitutional.

The provincial and municipal commissioners exercise all the functions of provincial and local government.

The forces of security are on guard against counter-revolution and break up all conspiracies.

The National Institute for Agrarian Reform and the Economic Planning Board exercise authority in matters of agrarian reform, production and industrialisation.

The National Bank and the Bank of Foreign Commerce control and regulate imports and the outflow of foreign exchange.

The parties and the revolutionary movements supported by the masses are the only ones which function normally.

The Constitution of 1940, abused and trampled upon by the tyranny, was re-established with substantial modification, as the Fundamental Law, which authorises the confiscation of the property of counter-revolutionaries, the expropriation of the holdings of the big semi-feudal landlords without prior cash payment, and the nationalisation of the imperialist enterprises of North American property; in general, it facilitates and gives life to the fulfilment of the objectives of the revolution.

Some of the standards and institutions created by the revolution are already complete and are, we could say, definitive. Others are, however, in the period of testing out, searching for adequate forms to be set up which will be suitable for effective organisation in accordance with the long-range aims of the revolution.

But in all that has been done up to now, the standards and institutions adopted represent the beginnings upon which there will be organised in a definitive way the new people's revolutionary state with political, economic and social institutions which enable the revolution to advance and guarantee the fulfilment of revolutionary tasks.

New Class Powers

The third characteristic, which is deduced from all that has been said, is that the revolution has removed some classes from power and put in others. It has destroyed the semi-colonial and semi-feudal landlord regime and initiated the revolutionary regime of national liberation, agrarian reform and social advance.

The dominant classes and social sectors which illegally held state power under the aegis and control of the North American imperialists, their banks and companies, were the semi-feudal landed gentry, the sugar magnates, the big export merchants the profiteering adventurers of the monopolies and the enterprises set up with the money and power of the state, and other big exploiters linked with the semi-colonial oppression of the country.

The fourth outstanding characteristic, implicit in the above, is that the Cuban Revolution not only overthrew the Batista tyranny but also the political domination which North American imperialism exercised on the country through its authorities, and the governors, politicians and local leaders who were subordinated to it and obeyed it.

Behind and above the tyranny was North American imperialism. This was a known fact.

There were those opposed to the tyranny who sought to eliminate it for the purpose of taking its place and maintaining the same relation with imperialism. Given the conditions of Cuba the tyranny could have been overthrown without the disappearance of the foreign domination of the country. Nevertheless, while this foreign domination existed, no serious reform, economic or social, could be carried out. Even more, under this domination, it would be possible neither to maintain nor consolidate elementary democratic liberties which the tyranny mocked and cruelly trampled underfoot.

The revolution set up a power which has broken the relation of subordination and subjugation to North American imperialism; has restored the national sovereignty, has been fully exercising it, and struggles for the economic independence of Cuba.

In place of the pro-imperialist power, subjugated and subservient to the United States, obedient to its orders and demands, the revolution established the new anti-imperialist power, not subjugated to the foreign power, obedient only to the orders of the people of Cuba, to the necessities of national development and the advance of the revolution.

The North American imperialists suffered a double defeat in Cuba in January 1959; their military mission with its aid and assistance to Batista was defeated, and likewise their intention to put in power a government of compliance, to replace the one which had fled.

Without having defeated North American imperialism, without having smashed its political domination over Cuba, without having assumed and exercised full national sovereignty, the Cuban Revolution would not have been able even to initiate the agrarian reform nor to move ahead with the social and economic transformations, since Yankee imperialism is the sworn enemy of the pro-

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gress, advance and well-being of the Latin-American peoples.

The Cuban Revolution is genuine, deep-going and effective because the revolutionary power is resolutely anti-imperialist, because the revolutionary power does not seek conciliation with imperialism, the number one enemy of the revolution, but on the contrary combats it.

The fact that the Cuban Revolution not only routed the tyranny but also the political domination of North American imperialism and that it is maintaining itself, is developing and is growing stronger in spite of the fierce efforts of the United States to defeat it, bears exceptional significance for all the countries of Latin America.

False Theories

The triumph and development of the Cuban Revolution in the face of the opposition of United States imperialism has thrown to the ground all the theories of geographic fatalism, all the theories of those who contend that the countries of Latin America, by being situated geographically near the United States, by being small and weak militarily, and economically dependent on the United States, must live forever subjected to this situation and must seek betterment within the framework of this dependency, with the imperialists and not against them, submitting to their criminal policy of war and reaction instead of opposing it, seeking to please the imperialists instead of going against them and combating them.

The Cuban Revolution has demonstrated the falseness of these theories, which have only served to cover up the cowardice and treachery of certain leaders of the bourgeoisie who do not go beyond timid and insignificant reforms, which Fidel has aptly characterised with the phrase "mercurochrome band-aids".

Cuba is a small country with only 6 million inhabitants. It is situated within a few minutes' flight of military planes of the United States. Even more, it has an important North American naval base driven into its own territory like an assassin's dagger. It has suffered the most monstrous economic deformation through single-crop sugar cultivation and an export economy that has reached such a degree that we are compelled to import more than $100 million of staple foods annually. Its foreign commerce has been virtually under the monopoly of the United States.

In spite of all these unfavourable circumstances, Cuba has been able to make her revolution: to defeat the pro-imperialist tyranny, to overcome North American imperialist domination; to restore and exercise her national sovereignty both in domestic and foreign policy; to undertake radical agrarian reform which has put an end to the native semi-feudal, big-landed estates and also those owned by North American imperialist companies; to establish relations with the socialist countries and march ahead in the struggle for economic independence and industrial development.

What can geographic fatalism do to a people who hold their heads high ready to make all sacrifices and who have, heading the Government, valiant and revolutionary leaders who have no fear of North American imperialism and do not tremble before its threats and aggressions?

Geographic fatalism is a myth. It is not geographic fatalism which keeps our peoples chained and backward and hinders them from winning their rights and exercising their sovereignty.

If Cuba has overcome the domination of North American imperialism, why cannot the rest of the countries of Latin America defeat it? Why cannot Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Peru, countries much larger, more populous and richer than Cuba? Why cannot the others?

The fifth outstanding characteristic of the Cuban Revolution is that it is taking place in an epoch in which the correlation of world forces has turned against imperialism, in an epoch in which the socialist camp is growing, is becoming stronger, and is expanding, while the camp of imperialism is becoming smaller and weaker.

This holds great importance for the Cuban Revolution.

This explains its accelerated advance and profound development in the field of social and economic transformations.

It is this which enables a small country in the immediate vicinity of the United States, with a firm revolutionary Government supported by a strongly united people willing to wage a life-and-death struggle, to maintain itself in face of the attacks of the most powerful imperialism on earth, and to carry the revolution forward in the fight against it.

Character of the Revolution

It is not possible in our Congress to avoid dealing with the question of the character of the Cuban Revolution.

The North-American imperialists, the counter-revolutionary war criminals, the thieves and traitors in exile, all agree on two things. First, they are in agreement on using all means, no matter how criminal, dirty and low to fight against and try to overthrow the revolution and the Government headed by Fidel Castro. Second, they agree on saying that the Cuban Revolution is Communist, as a justification and pretext for their criminal opposition to it.

All those who answer this campaign of the North-American imperialists and their lackeys by saying: "The revolution is not Communist", are absolutely right. The Cuban Revolution is not a Communist revolution; it is anti-imperialist and anti-feudal.

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It is a revolution which can be correctly characterised as national liberating and agrarian, patriotic and democratic, because of the tasks it confronts and is carrying out. It is a revolution which can be considered an advanced people's revolution because of the class forces which support and drive it and the radical methods it uses. It is a revolution of the common people, by the common people and for the common people, as Fidel Castro, heeding its social content and its perspectives, has said.

The historical tasks which the revolution confronts and is carrying out are fundamentally the following: the recovery and exercise of national sovereignty as the expression of national independence; the elimination of the big semi-feudal landed estates and the rest of the semi-feudal institutions; the handing over of the land to the peasants and the agricultural workers; the organisation of the co-operatives and the people's stores and the promotion and diversification of agricultural production, in conformity wth the necessities of the country and the overcoming of the single-crop economy.

Further, the recovery of property unlawfully seized by those who defrauded the state and enriched themselves illicitly under cover of the public power under the tyranny; the annulment of the onerous concessions granted to companies and individuals; the recovery of the national wealth from the imperialists, and the nationalisation of the enterprises which they have used to pillage and exploit the country. Other basic features include:

The industrialisation of the country according to plan, with the objective of overcoming the one-crop sugar economy and the achievement of economic independence as the foundation and guarantee of the political independence already achieved.

The elimination of the virtual monopoly of our foreign trade exercised by the United States, to be achieved through the establishment and intensification of trade with all, including the socialist countries.

The progressive reduction of unemployment through agrarian reform, industrialisation and increase in production.

The constant improvement of the standard of living of the workers, the peasants, and the whole people through the reduction of prices and rents, the raising of wages in accordance with the increase in production and productivity, the expansion of social security, paid vacations, and the establishment of recreation centres and other means.

The elimination of racial discrimination, the full integration of the Cuban nation and the eradication of race prejudice.

The carrying out of genuine and broader democracy for the people with new and more real liberties.

The development of the trade union movement, the peasant organisations, the students, the youth, the women and the professional workers on the basis of their own character, inner democracy, and support to the principles, aims and tasks of the revolution.

The eradication of illiteracy, the massive construction of schools, the extension, promotion and raising of progressive national culture to a higher level, and the re-evaluation of the written history of the nation to eliminate lies and distortions, introduced by the North-American imperialists, their lackeys and representatives of the reactionary classes.

Attention to the health of the people, to eliminate endemic diseases and epidemics, prevent illness, lift hygiene to a higher plane and promote the healthy physical development of the new generations.

The application and development of an independent foreign policy, based on the most profound interests of the Cuban nation—the necessities of the development of the revolution, the defence of peace, non-intervention and non-interference, coexistence and diplomatic and commercial relations with all countries.

The strengthening of all ranks of the Revolutionary Army, the workers' and peasants' militias and the organs of security in order to guarantee the armed defence of the revolution in the face of any intervention, invasion or attack of its enemies.

The strengthening and development of the revolutionary state as the unifying centre of all the revolutionary forces and the best weapon for the realisation of the historic tasks now facing the revolution.

These historic tasks by their economic and social content are anti-imperialist, national emancipatory, anti-feudal, progressive, people's and democratic.

The social classes that are objectively interested in the fulfilment of these historic tasks are the workers, the peasants, the urban middle classes and the national bourgeoisie. But the driving forces of the revolution, those which push it and drive it forward, are principally the workers, the poor peasants and the radical sectors of the urban small bourgeoisie. The driving forces are the popular classes, the "little people".

The methods which the revolution applies to realise its historic tasks are imbued with the action and the experiences of the proletariat, they are radical, revolutionary and effective. This is what makes the Cuban Revolution radical and advanced.

Such is a full explanation of the characterisation which we have given our revolution.

The Revolutionary Power

The revolutionary power is not a provisional power, even though it does not yet have its definitive political form and institutions. The revolutionary power has come to stay, to carry on the revolution up to the end.

This power will develop, will perfect itself and will

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adopt its definitive institutions as the revolution advances. The revolution had, first of all, to take care of the basic problems and the most urgent questions, such as liquidating the apparatus and political institutions of the tyranny, setting up a Government with sufficient powers to accomplish the work of the revolution and to undertake the agrarian reform and the changes in the economic structure. Later must come the political form, the Parliament and the manner of its composition, and the means of forming the Government, the local administrations, the administrations of justice, etc. These things will have to be done in such a way that their revolutionary content will always be guaranteed, along with maximum capacity to solve the real problems of the revolution.

The Yankee imperialists, the counter-revolutionaries and reactionaries of every kind, have been insistently calling for holding elections, in the hope that those elections would serve them to put a brake on the revolution, put obstacles in its way, revive the old political game, encourage personal ambitions, arouse oppositions and rivalries among the various revolutionary sectors, get rightist elements into positions from which they could disturb the work of the revolutionary state, etc.

The people *en masse* have opposed this claim and have rejected it. The people understand that the first thing to do is to solve the basic problems of the revolution, and then hold elections. The Yankee imperialists, the counter-revolutionaries and the reactionaries of every stamp assert that there is no democracy in Cuba, because no elections have been held.

Generally, in those countries where imperialism and capitalism dominate, elections, no matter how legal, do not reflect the true view of the people and do not serve to provide true democracy. At most, this democracy formally recognises certain political rights, whereas the true posts of command of society, the military power and the economic power, always remain in the hands of the enemies of the workers and of the people.

The Cuban elections have been held, but they were elections of blood and struggle. The nation *voted with its blood and struggle* against the tyranny, and overthrew it. With its blood and struggle, the Cuban people voted for the revolutionary power and set up the revolutionary Government and won for itself, in addition to the broadest public liberties, the real liberty of freeing itself of imperialist domination, of cutting down the big estates, of destroying the semi-colonial system and structure, of constructing a new economy, of improving its standard of living and of increasing its production and productivity.

The people of Cuba, armed in the Workers' and Peasants' Militias, is voting every day with rifle on shoulder, showing it is ready to defend to the death the revolution and the revolutionary Government. The people of Cuba supports the revolutionary Government with all its strength; the revolutionary Government carries out and realises the will of the Cuban people, satisfies its historic hopes and its positive demands. This is real democracy. This is a real people's Government.

What the Yankee imperialists, counter-revolutionaries and reactionaries hope to accomplish with premature, hurried elections is to take this real democracy away from the people so as to return to the false democracy of words and political trickery they had before, a Government of the pro-imperialists, the rich men and their advocates. But it is clear that they would not accomplish these purposes with an election either. If there were elections today the people would vote overwhelmingly to confirm the powers and functions of the revolutionary Government.

Elections Will Come

Tomorrow, when the revolution acquires its final organisation, the people will likewise vote overwhelmingly for the revolutionary authority. The elections then will not be like the elections the imperialist Yankees, the counter-revolutionaries and the reactionaries want, they will not be elections of politicians and tricksters, of bribery and deceit, of the personal self-seeking opportunists, but real elections, in which the people can express their revolutionary will.

The first elections that Cuba will have to hold, once the time comes to hold them, will be a plebiscite for a Constituent Assembly, to confirm the changes that have been made and those that have to be made in the Constitution, so that it can fully serve the revolution, and so that the Government institutions that it sets up will all have the revolutionary character and content that they need. Every step that the Cuban Revolution takes should reinforce the revolutionary state and not weaken it in any way. Its economic powers and functions have to be strengthened, so that it can orient, control, direct and administer production, economic development and the transformation of its semi-colonial economic structure.

Its powers have to be fortified for the promotion of a cultural revolution, the rescue and rebirth of the national progressive values of our culture, so that it can raise to a higher level the national revolutionary consciousness of the Cuban people. Its powers and functions relating to the defence of the country against the imperialist and counter-revolutionary menaces have to be strengthened, in order to nullify and frustrate the criminal, conspiratorial work of those who want to return to the past with its crimes and miseries, of those who disturb and hinder the labours of the revolution, of those who ally themselves to the imperialists and who betray the revolution and the country.

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The Folk-Song Revival

A. L. Lloyd

FOLK-SONG in Britain is in an interesting condition. Indeed, the condition is so far advanced that she is already in travail. Some say she's brought to bed of a monster, and others that she's about to lay a golden egg. The offspring will surely be a hybrid, but perhaps none the worse for that.

It is worth considering what is happening to folk-song, because certain new developments there begin to affect working-class culture, and may shortly do so to a greater extent, as I hope to show.

At present, two kinds of folk music performance are current among us: "traditional" and "revival". We apply the word "traditional" to performance by people living within the folk tradition, whose musical horizon is to a great extent bounded by the conventions of home-made, orally-diffused, mainly anonymous song—in short, the so-called authentic folk-singers and -musicians. By "revival" performance, we mean performance by people of normal modern urbanised-industrial culture, whose artistic interests extend to folk-music, either in its "authentic" traditional shape or in more-or-less adapted and modernised forms.

Of course, nowadays in our islands hardly anyone lives in the closed-culture conditions that in the past created folk-song of necessity. The number of surviving traditional performers, while not so restricted as we had thought a few years ago, is certainly dwindling and, in England at least, may be near to disappearance. On the other hand, the number of revival performers is increasing very fast.

As individuals or in groups, professional, semi-professional or amateur, folk-music performers are accepted nowadays as a natural part of the musical scene, though a few years ago they were regarded—in England, at least—as a mere oddity on the margin of normal cultural life. The term "folk-music performer" is preferable to "folk-singer" in this context, because more often than not the revival singer uses the repertory of folk-song but not its traditional style of execution.

We have no means of estimating the real extent of the new following for folk-music, but the successes of semi-formal concerts of the Hootenanny kind in many parts of the country, the fairly regular appearance of folk-music performers in television programmes such as "Tonight", and the reliance on folk-inspired music for big-scale "prestige" radio programmes such as *The Ballad of John Axon*, *The Song of the Road*, and *Singing the Fishing*, have helped to give sanction to a popular movement that shows itself in the growth of folk-music clubs in secondary schools and universities and in the sudden increase in folk-music courses at adult education centres, not less than in the changed policy of gramophone record companies that now issue twenty folk-music records for every one issued ten years ago. A pointer may be seen in the growth of the Ballads and Blues Association, a comparatively recently-formed body concerned with British and American folk-music and the folkier aspects of jazz, which already has some 8,000 members. In England and Scotland, the folk-song revival mainly affects the cities and towns, though there are signs that even village youngsters are beginning to extend their interest beyond rock-and-roll and the pops, as they become aware that folk-song is all the rage.

Left-Wing Colouring

It cannot be denied that the present revival in folk-music shows some left-wing political colouring. In view of the history of the revival, matters could hardly be otherwise.

It must be recalled that we are experiencing our second folk-song revival. The first revival occurred some sixty years ago, and inspired and was inspired by the great collectors, Miss Broadwood, Cecil Sharp, Vaughan Williams, H. E. D. Hammond, and others. It came about when cultured people, mostly of liberal outlook, stumbled on the riches of music and poetry preserved by the working people in the countryside, and began to make some of these treasures more widely-known. The consequent revival mainly affected middle-class people, musicians in search of a "national idiom", educators, and others less serious with an appetite for quaintness and charm. That first revival produced work of great value but, despite the fact that it introduced folk-song into the schools, for instance, it had no broad popular effect; in urban England the deeply-traditional kinds of folk-song remained "queer music", so, too, in the towns of Scotland and Ireland, though to a lesser degree.

The present revival appeared under no such respectable auspices. It followed the American revival that began in the 1930's when many workers, notably miners, in folk-singing areas accepted enthusiastically the ideas of the newly-formed C.I.O. Workers in the backward districts accepted unionism with the fervour that their forefathers had accepted nonconformist religion. For them it was a powerful deliverance, to be celebrated and furthered in song. The singing union organiser and the folk-style militant song—foreshadowed some years before by minstrels of the I.W.W.—became important to

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American labour during the tense and distressed times of the depression.

At the same time, in an attempt to bolster national morale, the Government of the United States was sponsoring made-work schemes that involved exploring the roots of the American folk tradition. Repositories such as the Folk Music Archive of the Library of Congress were enriched by thousands of field-recordings of folk-music made by investigators subsidised from the national treasury. Much of this material was made available to the public, and many thousands of city dwellers became acquainted with the folk-music of their own country for the first time.

These two factors of revival, the one spontaneous, the other state-inspired, combined to form a new consciousness of folk-song in America. In this atmosphere, and principally through radical encouragement, performers such as Josh White, Huddie Ledbetter, Burl Ives and Woodie Guthrie came into prominence, and groups of urban singers emerged, such as the Almanacs and the Weavers, whose repertory was a mixture of traditional folk-stuff and folk-style agitational song.

Folk-Song-with-Teeth

This kind of folk-song-with-teeth seemed to be what many British youngsters were waiting for. For some years, a handful of devoted persons such as Ewan MacColl had been proselytising on folk-song's behalf, but their efforts only began to be properly fruitful as the American example became clear. The American performers mentioned above had begun to be known in Britain already before the war, and acquaintance was to some extent deepened through radio programmes produced by D. G. Bridson and others, but it was not until ten years or so ago, when American recordings became more readily available here, that their influence became widespread, and our folk-song revival got under way.

The skiffle movement, which relied heavily on the recorded repertory of Ledbetter and Guthrie, was but one aspect of the folk-song revival here, and if it was the most widespread aspect, it was also the most primitive and most ephemeral. Generally, our revival was affected by the process whereby many youngsters searching for the roots of jazz found themselves led to American folk-song and from thence back to their own shores, to an interest in their native traditional music and, surprisingly often, to a desire to perform it.

True, most of our youngsters perform their traditional music in many non-traditional ways, with tricks of voice-production, instrumentation, rhythmic treatment, etc., borrowed from the world of commercial-popular music. Whether the material is thereby enriched or impoverished is arguable; the fact remains that it is given validity for a wide circle of performers and listeners whose musical interests might otherwise be limited to the banalities of Denmark Street.

The new folk-song revival seems to have taken by surprise the body officially concerned with folk-music in England. The English Folk Dance and Song Society has its headquarters in London, and branches in some forty-five districts all over the country. It has just over 3,000 members, and rather more than 6,000 associate members. It receives an annual grant from the Ministry of Education (£7,500 in 1961) as well as from local education authorities, and last year U.N.E.S.C.O. made a special donation of 2,000 dollars.

The Society has a distinguished history, and was the focal point of the valiant revival at the start of the century; but over the years its activities have centred more and more on folk-dance as an amiable social pastime. Song was rather neglected, contact with youngsters was tenuous, and thus the present revival seemed to catch the Society unawares. It has made efforts to avail itself of the benefits of the revival, without great success. Most of the participants in the revival are outside the orbit of the E.F.D.S.S., and are sometimes hostile to it, feeling rightly or wrongly that the Society (whose President is Princess Margaret) is too closely tied to the Establishment. Thus, the English Folk Dance and Song Society is in a dilemma, being neither a truly popular body nor yet a learned society proper.

No other body of official standing is devoted to the preservation, study and performance of folk-music in England; and since the E.F.D.S.S. is showing itself impotent to do this task adequately, and since, as we shall see, the matter is of great importance to working-class culture, the responsibility of the organised Labour movement is all the greater.

Workers' Songs

A peculiar and hitherto hardly-noticed feature of the folk-song revival is its great importance in the field of workers' songs. The labour anthems and militant marching songs of the Continental working-class movement are generally more respected than loved by our younger workers nowadays. Left-wing choirs, where they exist, find a more enthusiastic response to folk-style material than to the more conventional mass-songs. Of recent years, on demonstrations we have seen that the most successful examples of newly-created workers' songs are mainly folk-tunes fitted with topical words. Characteristically, at least nine-tenths of the songs made and sung on behalf of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament are of this kind. As far as Europe is concerned, Britain is probably unique in the degree in which it depends on folk-melody for its present-day political songs.

For this reason, among many others, a proper study of the meaning and the resources of our folk-

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music tradition is of great importance to the working class movement. In fact, some sections of organised labour have been vaguely aware that folk-song is supposed to be a "good thing", without being very clear as to why it should be considered so, and in the absence of informed commentary, even the enquirers are left to a large extent in the dark.

Ireland has its Folk-Lore Commission and Scotland its School of Scottish Studies, both institutions employing a full-time staff to collect, analyse and comment on traditional folk-lore materials. England has nothing of the kind, and our few serious folklorists are amateurs following the study in their spare time.

Mainly through lack of official encouragement and support, folk-song studies in England are in a low condition that falls far short of modern scientific standards shown elsewhere in Europe, and particularly in the People's Democracies.

The poverty of our work is perhaps clearest shown in our almost total neglect of the field of industrial folk-lore. Hitherto, what little study of English folk-music has been made has generally been limited to the rural traditions of the past. The collectors and commentators have generally neglected the workers' folk-song, evolved in more recent times in urban-industrial surroundings. Yet the role of the towns was always great in the development of our folk-song since medieval times, and more than a century ago, the *creation* of new folk material passed almost exclusively into the hands, or rather the minds and mouths, of the industrial proletariat.

Many of our scholars imagine that workers' folk-lore hardly exists, and their view would be supported by some who have spent all their lives in the working-class movement. This was also the opinion elsewhere in Europe, and it is proving utterly incorrect. It is a matter of knowing where to look for the animal and how to recognise it. As an indication of what others are doing, we may point to two recently-published compilations—the Karbusicky-Pletka collection of Czech workers' songs (*Delnické Písne*, Prague, 1958, 909 pages) and the Heilfurth collection of West German miners' songs (*Das Bergmannslied*, Kassel, 1954, 790 pages). Each of these works was received with astonishment by many who had never suspected what treasures of song their industrial workers were hoarding. And on the basis of such superficial work as has been done in Britain, we have reason to believe that our workers' folk-lore is at least as rich as the German, and that possibly our workers have as much to show as the Czechs.

Industrial Folk-lore

By workers' song, we are to understand songs made on the subject of work and the social condition and political struggle of the working class. By no means all this material falls in the domain that is arbitrarily delineated by the conventional specialist as "authentic folk-lore". The character and development of our workers' songs are closely connected with the history of the working-class movement, and they show various phases, ranging from *genres* hardly distinguishable from "classical" folk-lore to *genres* hardly distinguishable from the works of professional composers and poets.

Thus, our early industrial folk-songs, such as *The Colliers' Rant* or *The Four-Loom Weaver*, have much of the character of standard anonymous country folk-song, while the mine disaster ballads of the later nineteenth century, and particularly the strike ballads such as *The Durham Lock-out*, made at the end of the century, when the miners' trade union organisation was expanding rapidly amid militant enthusiasm, show more and more signs of individual authorship, while yet remaining very close to the world of "authentic" folk-song in text, tune, origin and function. In fact, many of these workers' songs represent a half-way stage not merely between folk creation and professional composition, but also between folk-song and political mass-song.

It cannot be claimed that the general run of workers' songs show as much beauty of melody and poetry as the anonymous song of the pre-industrial past. For one thing, no long process of mouth-to-mouth tradition (which can kill a song or can smooth it into lovely shape) has been at work on this newer stuff. Also, many workers' songs were made for topical and agitational use, the language is often blunt and the force does not endure. Then again, some of the creators of the songs were influenced by the decline in the standards of popular music and poetry that set in as entertainment became more and more a big business enterprise. Finally, of course, many worker-songmakers wanted to write in a more literary fashion than their education would support. For all that, even though so far we have only feebly scratched the surface of our workers' songs, we have unearthed several jewels, more than enough to convince us that by systematic field-recording in industrial areas, and by a careful combing of local and trade union journals, song-books, printed or cyclostyled song-sheets, workers' manuscripts, etc., we may amass a whole corpus of valuable and hitherto unknown materials of industrial folk-lore.

It can hardly be doubted that a thorough study of British industrial folk-lore—not only songs, but also tales, anecdotes, versions of oral history, ways of speech, customs, beliefs, etc.—would produce findings valuable to sociologists, historians, educators, writers, musicians, and such. But its supreme importance would reside in its service to the working class itself, in drawing together the scattered elements of the self-made cultural heritage of the industrial community, and, by implication, of the organised Labour movement. That heritage is some-

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thing to cherish dearly. As yet, our working class is only dimly aware of its extent, for the good reason that the heritage has not yet been properly explored. It seems likely that only the working-class movement itself, the Labour Party, the individual trade unions, the T.U.C. itself, can provide the conditions for a proper study of folk-lore as it now concerns us. And it would seem that the present time, while the enthusiasm of the folk-lore revival is with us, with all that that means in the creation of new workers' songs—it would seem that the present time is the time to start.

A Political Aspect of Town Planning

John Mahon

THE general crisis of capitalist society is reflected in the fact that many social problems are being intensified to a crisis point.

This is the case in the field of town planning, where capitalism is proving itself unable, in spite of the greater technical possibilities now existing, to solve such long-standing problems as the housing of the people, or newly-developing problems such as transport.

Public concern on these problems is growing, partly because of the larger numbers of people being involved, partly because of the direct personal hardship, and partly because of increasing awareness that hardship to many is bringing high profits to a few.

Experts and professional people with a social conscience have long been occupied with town planning problems. They have put forward various progressive proposals which from time to time have aroused considerable support. But they have never been able to make such a major impact as has changed the general course of events. The experts and the professionals are being reinforced by what can become a mass political movement.

As yet, public opinion is at the stage of recognising that the problem exists and that something ought to be done. It has not yet any clear programme of demands.

To advance from diverse discontent to an organised movement capable of united action for specific demands, and to bring the solution of the housing, transport and town planning problems into the scope of the progressive political movement, is a process which cannot take place spontaneously.

It requires leadership and activity by the Communist Party, through its own public activity and particularly through the advance of its electoral work to the winning of Communist seats on the councils and in Parliament, and also in influencing the thinking of the Labour movement. The recent conference held by our Party to discuss these problems showed that we have already a considerable number of interested and capable comrades who are able in many cases to combine work in specialist fields with public campaigning.

It is the taking up of these problems by the executive and district leaderships, the development of a policy and the carrying on of consistent public work, which is now required.

The Nature of the Problem

We inherited cities which were built and grew up under conditions very different from those of today.

Modern capitalism made great changes in the old cities. It added large numbers of workshops and factories, brought new forms of transport, greatly increased the population, and more recently, made big developments of offices, shops and new residential areas. These accretions took place without an overall plan and the growing cities often followed an old pattern which had no relation to modern needs.

Consequently, we find today in our big urban concentrations a number of negative features, including:

1. Ever-increasing distances from place of residence to place of work, producing a transport problem of time and expense for more and more people.
2. Increasing congestion in the city centres, and also in the subsidiary suburban centres, congestion which often holds up traffic movement for a considerable time, and has as a by-

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product the invasion of what should be quiet residential streets, by traffic seeking to escape the congested main roads.

3. The increasing sprawl of the suburbs into the countryside, taking valuable agricultural land, threatening the Green Belt, and further lengthening the journey of city workers.
4. Large-scale overcrowding, due to the shortage of housing, the uncontrolled influx of people from areas where work is less plentiful, and the decay of extensive areas of houses built up to 100 years ago, which cannot be effectively modernised.
5. The increasing class differentiation between the areas occupied by the well-to-do with their well-designed and equipped houses or luxury flats, gardens and greenery, ample space and facilities, compared with the drabness, dirt and decay of large working-class areas of the old two-storey house type, and also the monotony, insufficient space, low-quality building and lack of facilities in many recently-built areas occupied by the workers.

So a big technical and professional problem arises.

Is it possible to develop planning methods and to produce a coherent plan which will result in order instead of chaos, traffic moving at modern speeds, clean air instead of smoke and fumes, quiet instead of noise, a relation between home and work-place which does not waste two hours a day of people's lives, modern standards of housing and amenities for all and not just for a privileged few, and last but not least, beauty, colour and dignity instead of ugliness, drabness and squalor?

That the necessary professional competence, the bold imagination and the human sympathy required for such planning does exist, has been shown, for example, in the famous County of London Plan, and in other plans of a similar nature.

Even in capitalist society, good plans can be produced, publicised and applauded.

But are they carried out?

Generally speaking, the answer is "No"!

Such plans may and do have influence on various schemes, partial use may be made of them, they may remedy here and there some of the worst scandals. But we cannot point to a single one of our major cities which is being systematically reconstructed and developed with modern means in the interests of the people, according to a plan.

This is in marked contrast to what is going on in the socialist countries, where integrated short- and long-term plans are resulting in the transformation of whole cities and the solution of long-standing problems.

Problems Growing Worse

Here in Britain, because we have no operative plan for our cities, the modern techniques which should be, and under public control would be, the means of solving problems, are, under the present unplanned private control, a means of making these problems worse.

For example, the construction of numerous high buildings in the centres of our cities or in suburban centres, buildings which are exclusively devoted to offices, further increases the congestion, intensifies the transport problem, and worsens the housing shortage.

If such buildings were erected rationally, to a plan based on the people's needs, with a proportion allotted to housing, and properly spaced in relation to transport, industry and the Green Belt, they would ease all these problems.

Why are our cities not being reconstructed and developed according to a plan?

Broadly speaking, because the relevant public authorities lack the necessary powers and sufficient money. The technical means of such reconstruction exist in the building, civil engineering and allied industries, but these find other and more profitable employment.

The public authorities have the problem of town planning and often have the plan, but private enterprise has the power and the money, partly in the hands of a variety of vested interests, partly concentrated in monopoly groups. And private enterprise has the full support of the present Government.

Here emerges the political aspect of the matter.

The public authorities, lacking the necessary powers and money, often find themselves impotent in face of the landlords, financiers, speculators, investors and contractors. All these are busy disposing of land, labour, loans, machines and materials, for their private profit, and with little or no regard to the public interest.

So, for example, the London County Council solemnly tells the people that the major reason for the slow-down of its house-building programme is that no sites can be found in London, while everybody can see with their own eyes that site after site, often cleared by the demolition of quite good buildings, is being acquired by speculators and property investors, for the erection of huge office blocks and luxury flats, sold at colossal profits and let at colossal rents.

Houses for the people are usually built by methods which the ancient Egyptians would recognise as familiar to them, while the palaces of big business soar up into the sky at top speed, with the aid of the most modern machinery and productive methods.

Thus, we have a situation where plans to meet the needs of the great majority are thwarted by the unplanned activity of a tiny minority. In the process, the tiny minority are allowed to accumulate great fortunes at the expense of the people.

This is a reflection in the field of town planning of a main feature of capitalist society—that the owners of capital exploit for their private profit the

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people and the national resources, and that the productive power is not directed to benefit the people, but to make what most profits the rich.

A Political Solution Needed

The local authorities can only get the powers and the money they need through Parliament, and by the help of the Government.

The present Tory Government will give them neither powers nor money, for the Tories are the political party of the vested interests. They are the party of those who make money out of the housing shortage, the transport problem, the building scramble, the decaying houses and the high-rented city centres. The 1957 Rent Act is an example of Tory policy. The people need more homes, and the Tories give them higher rents.

We cannot avoid the conclusion that in order to realise in life the technical solution of the planning problem, there must also be a political solution. We need the right kind of plan, we need the political measures to realise it and we need the government which will bring about those measures.

This is where the Communist Party has an indispensable job to do, a job no one else will tackle, the job of bringing together the best possible plan to meet the people's needs, and the political forces of the people, so that political campaigning is developed to make town planning policy an election issue and to secure a parliamentary majority and a government willing and able to bring the plans to life.

What constitutes the best possible plan is a matter of considerable controversy. Even progressive technical and professional opinion differs on many important aspects of planning. It is very desirable that such questions as the design of housing blocks, the concept of residential neighbourhoods complete with their own amenities, density, overspill and many others should be publicly discussed by the experts, and for the education of public opinion. But before reaching conclusions expert opinion should also take into account the views of ordinary people, the people who will have to live in the new housing, the people whose political interest and support is needed to realise the plan.

The men and women on the waiting lists for homes; the people in the queues for the fewer and more expensive buses; the frustrated planners who know how much could be done and how little is being done; the local authorities and their staffs grappling with insoluble problems; progressive public representatives; the organisations which express the interests of these groupings—all these add up to a tremendous dynamic force provided they can agree on a policy around which they can campaign and act.

Is it possible for such a policy to emerge?

Certainly much discussion and initiative would be necessary, and so would the bridging of gaps of knowledge and outlook. For example, architects and planners could visit trade union branches, shop stewards' committees and tenants' associations to put forward their ideas. Local authorities could arrange public discussions. The Labour movement could carry on widespread activity.

Common conclusions on policy are possible because the very nature of the problem points to some elements of policy.

To end the growing distance between home and work-place involves the planned location of factories and offices, especially of new construction. Such planned location could not be decided only by local interests for national considerations are involved.

Transport would have to be co-ordinated with the new developments needed to overcome congestion, including the decentralisation. If people are to have adequate transport facilities, transport must be a public service, prepared to carry uneconomic routes where necessary.

The ending of centre congestion, the location of new housing and of industrial and office construction, the replanning of out-of-date centres and decaying areas, all raise the question of the powers of local authorities to compulsorily acquire land, and point to the need for the public ownership of urban land.

The provision of enough homes for the people immediately involves the power to acquire and develop sites, and to reconstruct whole areas. Money would be required on a scale only the Government could provide. The public authorities would need to have their own modern large-scale building organisation and ample materials.

Democratic Demands

Any town planning policy seriously aiming at the reconstruction of our cities in the interests of the people would have to take into account such essential demands as public ownership of urban land, power to locate new development, including industry and office, power to acquire sites and to reconstruct decaying areas, and the government provision of large sums of money at low interest rates.

These are democratic demands in the interests of wide sections of the people. On some of them much work has been already done.

Certainly a great and determined democratic movement would be needed to win these demands, which would have to be wrested by the strength of the people from the vested interests and the monopolists. It is not a matter of minor reforms but of democratic demands backed by the people to limit the power and profit of the vested interests.

It is sometimes said that only socialism can solve the problems of town planning, that only working-class power can deal with the vested interests. It is

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quite true that if we had a working class and socialist majority in Parliament, a socialist government would make a number of legislative and other developments which would clear the way for the rapid advance of town planning. But we have not such an understanding that makes a socialist majority possible immediately, while we do have urgent planning problems on which there is wide concern.

If we pose the matter so that it appears that only socialism can do anything, then we only interest the Socialists, those already convinced about socialism. Those who want homes, those who want to plan and build, require a lead and a policy in terms they can understand and accept, a policy for which they are prepared to take action To tell them that only socialism will solve their problems will not bring them into movement.

The demands around which the wide and varied sections concerned on the one hand with immediate needs for homes, transport and similar necessities, and on the other with the planning and reconstruction of our towns, can come together and act together, must at this stage be democratic demands.

Our recent conference on town planning called for the preparation of a policy document, discussion on these problems throughout the Party, and activity on local planning issues by our branches.

These steps, together with a wide extension of the local electoral work of the Party, will enable the Party to make its indispensable contribution to the town planning movement.

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The Interpretation of Chartism

A. L. Morton

THE nature of the Chartist movement is a matter of living interest to the British working-class movement of today. The National Charter Association, formed in 1840, was the first independent working-class party in the history of the world. As such it faced problems of a kind which have faced all working-class parties since. How can a party of the working class, while fighting for and retaining its independence of outlook and organisation, yet find and work effectively with allies outside? How can it retain its roots among the people, among the masses whose desires and demands it furthers, while at the same time building up an efficient leadership and organisation? What is the role of theory in defining policy and practice, strategy and tactics—in clarifying the aims of the movement and the way of achieving these aims? All these questions faced the Chartist leaders and activists in various forms, as they face the Communist Party today.

At a discussion in the History Group of the Party some of these points were reviewed, in relation particularly to new information on the Chartist movement recently published in various works,[1] and an attempt was made to analyse the various phases in the Chartist movement more closely than before. In doing this, reference was also made to a discussion about Chartism which has been going on between Soviet historians in the journal *Modern and Contemporary History*.

The Traditional View

The significance of Chartism is well brought out in Chapter II of *The British Labour Movement* by A. L. Morton and George Tate, where the story of the movement at its different stages is outlined. But in general the traditional view advanced by bourgeois historians still prevails. According to this, broadly speaking, the backbone of the movement was the six point Charter, with its demand for universal suffrage and electoral reform, which was originally drafted by William Lovett and his associates in the London Working Men's Association and published in 1837. The mass movement for the People's Charter, drawing on the widest sections of the people, reached its climax with the activities of 1839, after which it was rigorously suppressed and many leaders were arrested.

Subsequently Lovett broke with Chartism and turned from political to educational activity. Thereby, in the traditional view, Chartism "lost its brains". After this the Chartist movement was little but a "cry of despair", and the brief flare-up in the revolutionary year of 1848 was bound to end in ignominous failure. With the breaking up of the great assembly on Kennington Common, and so of the projected march to Parliament, in April of that year Chartism to all intents and purposes came to an end.

This is the kind of picture presented in the average school textbook where attention is concentrated merely on the six points of the Charter and the "fiasco" of 1848. Meanwhile the accumulation of new materials, though it has not yet led to any reassessment, has considerably filled out the picture of the movement given in earlier histories, in particular of activities in different localities. It is interesting to note that individual scholars investigating local movements tend to reach very different conclusions, depending largely on the classes of material on which they draw. The essays in *Chartist Studies*, edited by Asa Briggs, illustrate this. Some who draw their information mainly from the Home Office papers present a picture of Chartism from an almost exclusively ruling class point of view—the information sent in by spies and provocateurs, or by anxious local officials, and reactions to these. Others draw mainly on the radical press, which after 1840 was out of sympathy with the Chartists and so gave very little attention to their activities; as a consequence they underestimate the extent and achievements of the movement. But those who turn to the Chartist press and the writings of some of the leaders of Chartism bring to light interesting information about local organisation, the political outlook of leading figures, the theoretical discussions taking place and, in so far as indications have survived, the extent to which insurrection was purposefully planned at different stages.

One of the greatest pitfalls in writing the history of the working-class movement is to treat this in isolation from the whole background of events. There has been a tendency to do this over the whole modern period. It is easy to analyse Chartism in a vacuum and point to this or that failing on the part of theorists or organisers, but it is not very illuminating. The Chartists discussed and mobilised in a particular situation, and their activities brought various reactions. As the Chartist movement developed, for

[1] See A. L. Morton's article in *Marxism Today*, March, 1960.

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instance, it came up against the organs of a developing state machine which was progressively strengthened precisely in the attempt to keep the working class in its place.

And this state machine operated not only in terms of troops and police, the organs of direct repression, but also of provocateurs who infiltrated the movement, and propaganda and persuasion by various means. At the same time ruling-class parties were in a state of flux; in particular within the Whig alignment, which stood opposed to the Tory and High Church Party, the radicals were separating themselves from the Whig aristocrats and developing as spokesmen of the industrial bourgeoisie. But even among the radicals, with whom the working class had been in alliance and would be again, there were differing trends. It was in this complex situation that the Chartists strove to create a working-class consciousness in a proletariat still in process of formation, and to organise for action.

Another danger is that of arguing from hindsight. In particular, when mention is made of trade unions and their relations to Chartism there is a tendency to think of unions as they are today, as the basic organisations of the working class. It is often said, for instance, that Chartism failed because "the trade unions stood aloof". But in fact at this period trade union organisation was largely confined to some sections of the skilled workers. After the collapse of the all-embracing Owenite Grand National Consolidated Trade Union in 1834, attempts were made to build up organisation in different trades, but they did not produce significant results until 1844 and later. Moreover, the men who were active in this direction were also Chartists.

Stages of Development

A fruitful way of approaching the whole complex question of Chartism is to try to assess the different stages through which the movement passed. Any division into periods must necessarily be arbitrary and artificial to some extent but at the same time is helpful in bringing out the main influences which made the movement what it was and shaped its course. The stages in the Chartist movement would seem to be:

(1) From the beginnings in 1836 to the climax of 1839-40;

(2) From the formation of the National Charter Association in April 1840 to the General Strike of 1842 and its aftermath;

(3) The period 1843-8, during which there was considerable confusion of purpose and lack of mass activity, but which ended with the upsurge of 1848 and its outcome;

(4) The subsequent reorganisation of Chartism in the 1850's.

The first Chartist period 1836-40

The Chartist movement arose in the years after the Reform Act of 1832. The workers had been active in the fight for electoral and parliamentary reform, in support of the middle-class demand for the franchise, but they had seen middle-class demands met and their own ignored. On top of this the harsh Poor Law of 1834 made clear the nature of the new Parliament elected by the enlarged franchise. In particular, while raising not a finger to alleviate the circumstances which drove so many to seek relief, it proposed to raise funds for Benthamite barracks in which to incarcerate the poor. The Act aroused the most widespread protest, particularly in the north, and as this gathered strength there also began what was to be an acute and prolonged economic crisis which affected nearly every section of the working class.

It was not only the workers who were disillusioned after 1832. The radical middle class, who had drawn in the working class to fight for the Reform Act and created a revolutionary uproar which helped to force the measure through, were also disillusioned with the outcome. The radicals, representing the views of the industrial bourgeoisie, as well as important sections of the lower middle class, were outspoken critics of the aristocracy and landowners, of the Church, of the old Establishment in general. A small body, with a considerable aptitude for political organisation, they had exercised great influence in the struggle for reform, and fully expected to achieve a dominant position in the Whig party once victory had been won—to take a prominent place in Parliament. But in fact they achieved nothing of the kind—and at the election of 1837 suffered another severe setback when their members in the House of Commons were reduced to a mere twenty. Even these spokemen did not constitute a homogeneous group, advancing a clear radical programme, for there were several and various trends. Thus, the schools of Cobbett and Oastler combined a most outspoken radicalism with a Toryism that looked back with regret to the days before the Industrial Revolution. On the other hand there were such men as Francis Place who were strong supporters of the theories of Malthus and so of the new Poor Law.

So it was that, with their own problems and their own fight to conduct within the Whig alignment, the radicals were necessarily closely interested in Chartism; they looked, yet again, to turn the strength of the working-class movement to their own ends. Accordingly, their most influential organisation, the Birmingham Political Union revived in 1837, brought its programme into line with that of the London Working Men's Association in 1838 when agitation for the Charter began. The latter, for its part, proclaimed its object as the drawing together of "the intelligent and influential portion of the working classes" and the seeking "by every legal

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means to place all classes in society in possession of equal political and social rights". But though the London body remained confined mainly to skilled artisans, or petty-bourgeois radicals, the branches of the W.M.A. formed in provincial centres were sometimes much broader in basis and so also in outlook.

In London there was also a militant movement in the shape of the London Democratic Association led by George Julian Harney, based on the unskilled workers of East London. In addition, throughout the country, there were the radical clubs which had been fighting for freedom of the press, groupings concerned to press for factory legislation and the reduction of hours, embryo trade unions which had long been agitating for a decent wage scale—such as the stockingers of the East Midlands; and, embracing all these up to a point, a great and growing surge of opposition to the Poor Law. This, in itself, gave rise to new forms of organisation, particularly in the north; to the Great Northern Union at Leeds and the Northern Political Union of Newcastle. These came largely under the influence of Feargus O'Connor and his associates, and reflected the outlook of the masses in the newer industrial areas at a time when the struggle against the Poor Law was beginning to broaden into a more consciously political fight.

Mass Movement for the Charter

All these varying organisations were drawn into what became a widespread mass movement for the People's Charter, a movement which not only covered all the sectional interests of the working class but also extended to middle-class radicals in influential positions. Throughout this period, therefore, there was no single body which could claim to speak for Chartism as a whole. Rather there was a number of contending organisations each of which was fighting for control of the developing movement. Francis Place, for instance, as a leading radical, did his best to press the Malthusian outlook on the Chartist movement and to divert attention from agitation against the Poor Law—an attempt which was finally defeated only when the northern organisations joined in full force in the movement.

This whole period is marked by an acute conflict over tactics and strategy, during which the representatives of the bourgeois radicals and, if to a lesser extent, the artisans suffered considerable defeats and seceded from the movement to start fractional agitations of their own. This tendency came to the fore with the meeting of the People's Convention in February 1839, when the incompatible interests of the contending groupings were brought into the open. At this Convention problems of tactics and organisation were discussed at length. But though it was clear that Parliament would not accept the petition for the Charter there was no clarity about the next stage in the struggle. Nor was the organisational aspect successfully dealt with—the problem of transforming a very broad movement into a stable organisation. In fact the whole character of the problem was not recognised. The delegates to the Convention came from meetings numbering in some cases hundreds of thousands, which had enthusiastically sent them on their way. Seeing themselves, with justice, as leaders with a powerful mass backing, they failed to see that this could dwindle disastrously if there were no firm organisational structure to hold the movement together.

It is probable that the earlier experiences of 1832 exercised a considerable influence on some Chartist leaders. Then the bourgeois radicals had raised a revolutionary uproar and taken up a threatening posture, and their demands had been met. It was now the turn of the working class, with its greater numbers and strength, to make a noise like a revolution and threaten insurrection, and its demands, too, would be conceded. But though this illusion prevailed in some quarters it would not be true to say that there were no serious attempts to organise and arm for insurrection. The evidence is necessarily tenuous, since such activities were not publicised, but it is clear that local leaders did both consolidate organisation and train members in some parts, particularly in the north. It is equally clear, however, that the chief leaders of the movement had an inadequate grasp of strategy and tactics so that when insurrection was envisaged it was always too little and too late.

O'Connor, for instance, advanced the slogan of struggle as "peacefully if we can, forcefully if we must". This proposition, however logically sound, was practically fatal, for it meant that plans for determined action were always only made after the Chartist petitions had been rejected and the great efforts behind them had met with rebuff—when, in other words, the mass movement had passed its peak and, without a firm organisation to cement it, had entered a phase of retreat. This is what happened at the close of 1839 when, after Parliament had rejected the petition, plans for a general strike had come to nothing, and the Convention had dissolved, isolated plans for insurrection were put into effect—and inevitably came to grief, particularly in Wales. The same pattern was repeated in 1842 and 1848.

It is common for bourgeois historians to assert that Chartism never again reached the heights it reached in 1839, when it embraced sections of the people ranging from bourgeois radicals to the factory proletariat and achieved a huge mobilisation of forces. For this mistaken view there is a political basis—namely, that such critics fail to realise that a potentially revolutionary movement is not necessarily weakened by shedding its right wing. This is what, in fact, happened when the bourgeois radicals and Lovett and his associates broke with Chartism. Far from diminishing, the movement now entered on a second and very important stage of development.

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The National Charter Association, 1840

In the early months of 1840 Chartist leaders, arrested during the movement of 1839, began to come out of prison. A considerable amount of thinking had been going on and some had been facing the implications of the failure of 1839. In July, the National Charter Association was founded. Now, for the first time, there was a single body which could claim to speak for the movement and which was unequivocally working class in character and outlook; those bourgeois and petty-bourgeois radicals who still gave their support remained as allies accepting the working-class programme. There was also a definite form of organisation. It is impossible to say how many dues-paying members of the association there were, or how regularly dues were collected. But the important point is that there was an established central organisation and that many local branches were set up. In sum, in place of a medley of organisations, clubs and discussion circles, there was now a working-class political party on a national scale. The reality of the change is reflected in the language and content of the Second Petition for the Charter which, in addition to the parliamentary reforms embodied in the Six Points, now advanced specifically working-class demands in relation to raising wages, shortening hours and improving intolerable working conditions.

It was at this stage that the Chartists faced the twin problems of ensuring independence yet acquiring allies, of strengthening their organisation in pursuance of a clear aim yet not becoming sectarian. It cannot be said that these problems were solved, but the conditions were complicated and difficult. Despite the shedding of the right wing the membership of the movement was still heterogeneous—there were still different factions and groups representing different sectional interests of the workers, which at this time of rapid development and transformation of industry were sometimes at loggerheads. Though there was a dues-paying core yet membership fluctuated greatly and organisation was not strong. In this situation Chartist leaders, learning from former experience, rightly saw that the problem was to unify the working class and to establish and maintain independence of the bourgeois radicals. And so, using the Charter as rallying point, they conducted the sharpest ideological struggle with radicalism in all its aspects—with the Anti-Corn Law League, for instance, and Joseph Sturge's Complete Suffrage Union which was attempting to recapture the movement and reassert bourgeois leadership.

This necessarily led to a considerable sectarianism which was almost inescapable at this stage. Just as, at a later date, the early socialist bodies tended single-mindedly to stress socialism above all else—to put the view that once socialism was achieved all problems would be solved, and in so doing to neglect the immediate demands of the working class—so the Chartists stressed the Charter, arguing that this was the first necessity and that, once won, everything else would follow. This was perfectly correct, in that the Charter—with its demand for universal franchise and electoral reform in the circumstances of the time—posed, in essence, the issue of political power for the working class, as the bourgeoisie fully realised. Nevertheless, exclusive stress on the Charter meant that the movement had all its eggs in one basket, that all efforts and activities were directed to this single political end while other ways of taking up immediate working-class demands were neglected.

At the same time this approach, coupled with organisational weaknesses, meant that much depended on the national leaders of the movement, the orators who could mobilise and gain the support of tens of thousands. The Chartist leaders in their turn, overestimating the effective strength of the movement and underestimating the resources of the ruling class—not grasping, in other words, the realities of the class struggle—constantly promised immediate success in winning the Charter. In so far as the necessary steps to ensure victory were not taken they were thereby preparing the way for widespread disillusionment. When the movement again reached a high point, with the presentation of the Second Petition with a larger number of signatures than the first, and after its rejection a general strike developed, the Government once more acted as it had done *before—it arrested the leaders and left the movement* in disarray.

This second failure to reap the results of much activity and education—for the Chartist newspapers and travelling lecturers were constantly educating adherents on political matters, the past history of revolutionary struggle and so on—was in large part the result of shortcomings among the leadership. These were sharply shown up in relation to the organisation of the general strike, since some—including Julian Harney—turned tail and tried to prevent the spread of strike action. Here were the inevitable results of lack of a clear theoretical outlook; such men had rejected radical leadership in favour of working-class action, but when it came to the point were unwilling to carry this through.

On the other hand some Chartist leaders had what might be called a "putschist" ideology, which was common on the Continent at this time. While they were fully aware of the importance of mass pressure by a unified working-class movement, and consistently organised this, when they thought of insurrection it was in quite other terms—not in terms of an overwhelming popular uprising but rather of a small well-organised conspiracy. This outlook, which was prevalent among the left wing, derived in part from study of the experience of the left in the French Revolution. Bronterre O'Brien, whose influence was great in the early stages, and Harney who learned much from O'Brien, were both steeped in the history

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of the French Revolution; from which, incidentally, they were removed by a period not much longer than that which separates 1961 from the General Strike of 1926. O'Connor for his part was acutely aware that the Irish insurrection of 1798 had almost been successful, and this influenced his thinking.[2] Meanwhile the state machine—including a strengthened police force and troops which could now be moved rapidly from place to place on the new railways—could deal with insurrectionary attempts, whereas there is evidence that when the 1842 strike looked like spreading widely there was lack of confidence in ability to deal with the situation.

The failure to bring off this strike, and the bad showing of the official Chartist leadership in this respect, disillusioned many in the movement, in particular those now engaged in building up trade union organisation. After 1842, therefore, there were several years of quiescence during which the Chartists, to a considerable extent, lost the initiative.

The Period 1843-48

The mass arrests and trials at the close of 1842 once more beheaded the movement, leading to a rapid decline in Chartist activity. But this also came about because other matters claimed attention. Whereas formerly the demand for the Charter had united the whole working class, now it was one of several competing causes. The Anti-Corn Law League was in full spate, and before its activities came to a triumphant close in 1946 the Chartists were constantly engaged in explaining the limitations of its programme from the point of view of the working class, whose support was as consistently sought. Developments relating to factory Bills and education also claimed attention and so too did co-operative enterprises of various kinds. This was also a period when trade union organisation began to revive among the potters, cotton-spinners, and typographers, while the Miners' Association rapidly increased in membership. These activities were in themselves important and valuable; the tragedy was that Chartism was unable to weld them into a unified movement of a class.

At this stage, therefore, there was a progressive narrowing of the mass basis of Chartism. The nature of the failure of the general strike of 1842, and the demands of building up union organisation, led many trade unionists to adopt a less political, a more restricted, outlook. The numerous domestic and hand workers—such as weavers, stocking-frame operatives, nailmakers and the like—were, on the other hand, ceasing to be an effective force, yet it was they who had provided so much of the mass support for Chartism. Inside the factories the male labour force was chiefly of skilled men with a sectional outlook, while unskilled work fell largely to women and children. Here the next stage of the struggle, before a factory proletariat was fully formed, was the limiting of hours for the women and the removal of young children from the factories altogether—a fight conducted on the issue of factory legislation, hours of work and rates of pay.

This period of flux was marked by O'Connor's domination of the movement and the launching of his Land Scheme—for peasant proprietorship and land colonies. O'Connor symbolises both the strength and weaknesses of Chartism. While he had courage, energy and knowledge of popular feeling and how to harness it, he could provide no clear perspective for the movement which would have made possible effective organisation for this end. In fact the Land Scheme was a great diversion; if this was an attempt to provide a new outlet for Chartist efforts, it was very much the wrong kind of outlet.

However at this period, as earlier, there were Chartist Halls with education classes and schools, extended lecture tours, Chartist churches, women's groups—all of which contributed to the formation of the working class and class consciousness. There was a considerable amount of consistent work and efficient organisation on a local level which brought together activists in the different fields of trade union and co-operative work. In addition there was a very important development in the founding of the Fraternal Democrats in 1845, and later of other international bodies. These, in which Harney and a new recruit to Chartism, Ernest Jones, were active, gave a new contact with contemporary European movements and a wider understanding of the common front of the working class internationally. However there was hardly time for these more positive endeavours to become consolidated before the movement was swept into the activity of the revolutionary year of 1848.

It seems clear that the movement which sprang into action in the spring of 1848 was on a considerably narrower basis than had been the case in 1839 and 1842. Nevertheless the fact that it did spring into action, and on the scale realised, is evidence that there was not stagnation but considerable work in the intervening period. The official and usually accepted figure of 1,975,946 signatures to the Third Petition, while fewer than those on the Second, is still larger than the number obtained for the First. And this figure, issued after a very cursory examination, was strongly challenged by the Chartists themselves. Much stress was also laid on alleged irregularities, which on consideration really amount to very little. Undoubtedly there would have been some false signatures, in an attempt to discredit the whole—this was one of the functions of provocateurs; there would also have been many signatures in a single hand since organisers signed for those who could not write for themselves. But perhaps the

[2] It should perhaps be added, to prevent misconception, that 1798 was a mass national uprising rather than a *putsch*.

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most significant fact is that the petition itself was immediately destroyed so that there is only the word of a biased committee in evidence. In this situation historians are at fault to accept without question the official finding.

It is also usually affirmed that the prevention of the projected march to Parliament, from the great Kennington Common meeting of April 1848, brought Chartism to an end in a "fiasco". But yet again this failure was followed by attempts to organise uprisings and it is not until the autumn, with fresh arrests of hundreds, that this phase of the movement comes to a close. Even this was not, as most bourgeois historians would have it, the final end of Chartism, for it now entered on another stage.

Chartism from 1850

The whole of the decade 1837-47 had been marked by an exceptionally severe and prolonged economic crisis. In the subsequent decade there was an almost unbroken capitalist expansion which continued for a whole generation. Whereas Chartist leaders had earlier had to direct a genuinely mass movement, which at times developed almost spontaneously, the leaders of this period were grappling with the task of stimulating a revolutionary movement in a period of stabilisation and boom. When they emerged from prison it was to find that the revolutionary forces on the Continent had suffered defeat and the Chartist movement in England, though still alive in various localities, had dwindled away. This was the period, after O'Connor's illness and death, that Ernest Jones came to the fore as the chief leader of the movement.

On the other hand in 1848 the Communist Manifesto had been published and a scientific socialist theory placed at the service of the working class. The manifesto first appeared in English in 1850 in the pages of Harney's *Red Republican*, that is, in a journal which had a very small circulation and influence. In effect the few Chartist leaders, such as Harney and Ernest Jones, who profited from Marxism did so only at a moment when the mass movement on a national scale had disappeared; the revived Chartist organisations were very small, with only a thousand or so members by comparison with the 20,000 or more of the past. But this is not to say that the results were insignificant. The new programme issued by Ernest Jones in 1851, under the slogan "The Charter and Something More", included many points of a socialist character.

In the conditions of this period it was difficult for Chartists to absorb a Marxist outlook and see clearly the nature of the class struggle. Economic problems were no longer so acute as in earlier years, even among the poorest sections of the workers, and the growing consolidation of capitalism gave grounds for continuing illusions about class collaboration and "fair shares for all". Nevertheless Ernest Jones succeeded in translating Marxist ideas into popular language, the writings of this period show a growing political clarity, and socialist thinking did begin to take root. Moreover there was a new consolidation of work in those localities where Chartists entered the field of local politics, as in Leeds where elections were contested for the city council and at one time seven Chartists were elected. Vestry elections were also contested and at one time all seven churchwardens were Chartists who played a considerable part in local affairs. As a result the Chartist movement lasted longer in Leeds than elsewhere, the members concerned continuing to hold seats on the city council up to 1853 and later, though after 1854, when the National Charter Association came to an end, they held them under the title of radicals.

The organisational and educational work at this stage was, then, not without effect at the time nor was it lost on future generations. But after 1848, in the prevailing conditions of boom, the ruling class was progressively able to influence sections of the working class and buy off the skilled workers, to deflect the working class from the political struggle and get a hearing for the doctrine of collaboration between classes. In general there was a consolidation of the ruling class at this period and the influence of the industrial bourgeoisie became much greater after the victory of 1846. So it was that in 1867 trade union leaders were once more drawn in behind the radicals in the fight for further extension of the franchise. Nevertheless the workers had an independent platform in this battle for reform which was of great importance and prepared the way for a new stage of development. Now, of course, the main Chartist demands were conceded—partly because there was no longer the same fear as formerly since working-class leaders had been tamed, but primarily because pressure was so strong that, whatever the fears, it was irresistible. Thereafter the bourgeoisie turned rapidly to the task of extending education to tame the working class as a whole.[3] The story of independent working-class struggle recommences once more with the revival of socialism in the 1880's.

Assessment

Looking back over these stages of development it is possible to arrive at a general assessment of Chartist achievement. At its outset Chartism was a very broad movement, largely unorganised and including a variety of conflicting organisations, which conducted effective mass struggle up to a culminating point in 1839. The lessons of this struggle were learned, and at the next stage attention was concentrated on freeing the emergent working-class movement from bourgeois influence. This was the significance of the National Charter Association of 1840 which was a qualitatively new force, quite different in kind from earlier working-class associations and

[3] See Brian Simon, *Studies in the History of Education* 1780-1870 (London, 1960).

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clubs. Here was an inclusive national body with a programme and organisation designed to speak and provide leadership for the movement as a whole.

This movement, however, though more homogeneous than formerly, was still composed of very diverse sectional interests, sometimes sharply opposed in outlook. In order to weld it into an effective political force, able to take a common class action, it was essential that the programme advanced should not underline differences but rather unify the widest sections. The programme of the Charter fulfilled this function. It was not, of course, a socialist programme, but the fight for universal suffrage was an essential preliminary to the fight for socialism. The conduct of this struggle, and the educational efforts which accompanied it, contributed greatly towards the formation of the working class and a working-class outlook, at a period before industry had reached the stage when a factory proletariat came into being.

Chartist leaders, such as O'Brien, Harney and Jones, sought guidance from past revolutionary struggles and the radical democratic tradition in England. In fact there was a strong sense of history and a firm political grasp in so far as it was realised that the main issue was the achieving of working-class power in the Government. But on questions of economics the movement was necessarily weak; though Chartist theorists drew on the lessons of the early socialist economists to teach that labour is the source of all wealth and that the workers were being deprived of the fruits of their labour, they tended to draw the conclusion that the fruits of labour should be equitably distributed between capitalists and workers. They did not develop these ideas to the point of recognising that the working class could only come into its own and achieve power over the state as and when private property was expropriated. In other words, they were still imbued with the ideas of Owenite socialism which, as Engels pointed out, was Utopian "proceeding originally from the bourgeoisie" and so divorced from the realities of the class struggle.[4]

The full explanation of the nature and course of the class struggle, and of how the working class must organise to prosecute this struggle—in an independent working-class party guided by scientific socialist ideas—was only given by Marx and Engles. Only in the very early stages of its formulation was this theory available to Chartist leaders and then only when the days of mass struggle had passed. In fact, Marx and Engels drew the lessons about working-class organisation in part from their knowledge of and witnessing of the struggles of the Chartist movement—which projected the first independent working-class party in history. This movement was one of the formative influences in the development of Marxist theory.

It is, therefore, beside the point to criticise the Chartists because they were not Marxists. And it would be equally unhistorical to assert that, because it was not guided by scientific socialism, therefore the National Charter Association cannot be considered a working-class political party. Engels, writing in 1886 to Sorge about contemporary developments in the United States, has some remarks which bear closely on the historical significance of Chartism.[5] "The first step of importance for every country newly entering into the movement," he wrote, "is always the organisation of an independent political party, no matter how, so long as it is a distinct workers' party." No matter, Engels said, that "the first programme of this party is still confused and highly deficient"—this is an inevitable evil but a transitory one. The main point is that "the masses must have time and opportunity to develop and they can only have the opportunity when they have their own movement—no matter in what form so long as it is only *their own* movement—in which they are driven further by their own mistakes and learn wisdom by hurting themselves". He made clear what was in his mind when he concluded: "The movement in America is in the same position as it was with us before 1848."

The National Charter Association was clearly an independent party of the working class in the sense that Engels is here using that term. And this is a correct use of the term in relation to the conditions in Britain in the 1840's, at a transitional stage when widely differing sections were being pressed into a proletariat in course of formation. In this situation the National Charter Association succeeded in uniting the working class of a developed nation, for the first time in history, and in so doing, whatever its failings, assumed and held for a decade the leadership in the battle for democracy.

[4] F. Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class.*

[5] *Selected Correspondence*, p. 450.

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Science and Government

John Moss

SCIENCE AND GOVERNMENT by C. P. Snow (Oxford University Press, 9s. 6d.) has quickly become the most hotly discussed book of the year. Only eighty-eight pages long, the book is the text of the three Godkin Lectures given at Harvard University last year by Dr. Snow.

The immediate controversy aroused was about the preparations for and the conduct of the last war. But Snow's argument goes deeper, and of great interest are the implications for the present and the future.

Faced with the first serious use of science in war, the British Cabinet made errors which cost the lives of hundreds of thousands; and it only succeeded in using science and scientists in the effective prosecution of the war after the most desperate in-fighting in secret or half-secret committees.

While these mistakes cost lives and delayed the end of the war, their repetition now can mean suicide. The stockpiling of nuclear weapons on a scale that, to use the latest American expression, would "overkill" the world's population, U.S. bases in Britain, the Polaris missile base, agreement to extend possession of nuclear weapons to regimes like that in power in Western Germany—all are decisions taken or agreed to secretly by the present British Cabinet, and any of them could result in national suicide.

Snow's cautionary tale is to show where what he calls "closed politics" leads—the secret decision-taking of a handful of highly-placed men. This method of taking decisions is bad enough about matters which are not designed to do harm, argues Snow. But it is in the making of weapons of absolute destruction that the argument is sharpest.

These "cardinal choices . . . which determine in the crudest sense whether we live or die" are taken secretly by a handful of men who do not know what their choice depends on or what the results may be. He gives as examples "the choice in England and in the United States in 1940 and 1941, to go ahead with work on the fission bomb; the choice in 1945 to use that bomb when it was made: the choice in the United States and the Soviet Union, in the late forties, to make the fusion bomb: the choice, which led to a different result in the United States and the Soviet Union, about intercontinental missiles" (p. 1).

It is now fairly generally known that in 1945 the American scientists warned that the effects of the atom bomb "were different in kind from anything before", but that their statement was shelved by the United States War Department.

The First Atom Bomb

That those who took the decision to drop the bomb on Hiroshima had not the slightest clue about its effects is borne out by Attlee's amazing deadpan performance on B.B.C. "Panorama" in March this year, when he said about the first atom bomb:

"I knew nothing about it, except it was a device of some kind to produce a very big explosion."

This amplifies what he had told Francis Williams:

"We knew nothing whatever at that time about the genetic effects of an atomic explosion. I knew nothing about fall-out and all the rest of what emerged after Hiroshima. As far as I knew, President Truman and Winston Churchill knew nothing of these things either, nor did Sir John Anderson, who co-ordinated research on our side." (*A Prime Minister Remembers: the War and Post-War Memories of Earl Attlee*, p. 74).

Professor P. M. S. Blackett in his book *Military and Political Consequences of Atomic Energy*, pointed out that at the Yalta Conference in February 1945 Stalin pledged that the Soviet Union would declare war on Japan three months after the end of the war in Europe. VE Day was May 8th, and the Soviet Union declared war on Japan on August 8th. But on August 6th, though President Truman knew all about the Soviet pledge, the first atom bomb was dropped.

This was done even though the Japanese Government had put out peace feelers as early as May 1945, even though United States air mastery over Japan was almost complete and even though the Red Army's advance through Japanese-held Manchuria was spectacularly rapid.

Blackett concludes that there was "no compelling military reason for the clearly very hurried decision to drop the first atomic bomb on August 6th. But a most compelling diplomatic reason, relating to the balance of power in the post-war world, is clearly discernible." (*Military and Political Consequences of Atomic Energy*, p. 123).

The only two atom bombs available were whisked across the Pacific in the nick of time to ensure that the Japanese Government surrendered to American forces alone. Blackett concludes: "the dropping of the atomic bombs was not so much the last military act of the Second World

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War as the first act of the cold diplomatic war with Russia now in progress" (p. 127).

A last word may be added by Dr. J. R. Oppenheimer, who was witch-hunted in the United States after his decisive wartime contribution to the making of the first atom bomb:

"Every American knows that if there is another major war, atomic weapons will be used. We know this because in the last war, the two nations which we like to think are the most enlightened and humane in the world—Great Britain and the United States—used atomic weapons against an enemy which was essentially defeated" (quoted by Blackett, p. 128).

Strategic Bombing

The men who decided to drop the atom bomb on Hiroshima took the same sort of decision as those who planned strategic bombing of Germany during the war.

The decision showed the same cruelty about the possibility of exterminating tens of thousands of people, and was motivated by the same desire for political advantage over the Soviet Union. Furthermore, strategic bombing was proved to be militarily futile, as Snow's story of what happened during the war shows.

Churchill's protégé and adviser in the War Cabinet, Lord Cherwell—F. A. Lindemann—in 1942 proposed the strategic bombing of German working-class houses as the way to win the war. Lindemann met Churchill through Lord Birkenhead (F. E. Smith), and Churchill and Lindemann were friends until the latter's death. This man of mystery, believed to be half German himself—"The Prof" as he was fatuously known in Cabinet circles—was the only member of the Cabinet who could claim to be a scientist, and his bombing proposal was accepted with the minimum of discussion.

Backed by an out-of-office Churchill, he had joined his master in trying to warn the top people about the danger of Hitler's rearmed Germany. He was repaid for his loyalty by being made the effective scientific overlord during the war's crucial stages.

Lindemann's claim that half the houses in the larger towns could be destroyed in eighteen months was as wrong as it was inhuman. But the scheme of a man whom Snow calls formidable, suspicious, malevolent and sadistic was accepted.

According to Henry Tizard, whom Lindemann had ousted as the Government's chief scientific adviser, the estimate of the houses that could be destroyed was five times too high. Independently, Professor P. M. S. Blackett calculated six times too high.

If Tizard's calculation had been accepted, the bombing strategy would not have been worth concentrating on, despite the enthusiasm for it of Bomber Command's chief, Sir Arthur "Bomber" Harris. But Lindemann had his way, and after the war his calculations were found to be ten times too high.

Professor Blackett in *Military and Political Consequences of Atomic Energy* quoted the total weight of British and American bombs on Germany during the whole war as 1,350,000 tons, killing between 300,000 and 500,000 people. But the bombing did not halt German war production—Germany made 12,100 tanks in 1943 and 19,000 in 1944. Even before the Lindemann-inspired decision, the effect of Britain's first bombing offensive in 1940-1 turned out to be wrong by a factor of at least fifty "one of the greatest numerical blunders of military history," wrote Blackett.

Working-Class Houses

The concentration on bombing German workers' houses in 1942 was outlined in a Cabinet Paper:

"The bombing must be directed essentially against German working-class houses. Middle-class houses have too much space around them, and so are bound to waste bombs; factories and "military objectives" had long since been forgotten, except in official bulletins, since they were much too difficult to find and hit. The paper claimed that—given a total concentration of effort on the production and use of bombing aircraft—it would be possible, in all the larger towns of Germany (that is, those with more than 50,000 inhabitants), to destroy 50 per cent of all houses."

Snow comments:

"Let me break off for a minute. It is possible, I suppose, that some time in the future people living in a more benevolent age than ours may turn over the official records and notice that men like us, men well-educated by the standards of the day, men fairly kindly by the standards of the day, and often possessed of strong human feelings, made the kind of calculation I have just been describing. Such calculations, on a much larger scale, are going on at this moment in the most advanced societies we know. What will people of the future think of us?" (*Science and Government*, p. 48).

The bombing blunder took place in the year of Stalingrad, when the Soviet Union was crying out for the Second Front.

The bombing of German cities was not only a diversion from opening the Second Front, but was done at the expense of Coastal Command's escorts for convoys.

Captain S. W. Roskill (R.N. ret'd), writing in the *Sunday Times*, showed how the bombing policy nearly defeated Britain at sea.

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The Captain states that in 1942 Allied merchant ship losses were 1,664 ships, totalling 6¼ million tons, and by March 1943 the rate of loss was even higher.

But war losses in convoys which had air and surface escorts were insignificant.

Neither the Soviet Union nor the Germans favoured strategic bombing.

The Germans proposed during the early part of the war no bombing of cities, not on humanitarian grounds, but because their calculations on the wastefulness of such methods were more accurate than Lindemann's.

Britain was wedded to strategic bombing, as if to a faith, in all conditions and circumstances from bombing North West Frontier "tribesmen" in India, to the last obliterating raids of the Second World War, jointly with the Americans, to blot out Dresden and destroy the Czech Skoda works as a potential industrial rival.

Mass annihilation, from Lindemann on, has been the credo of those who hate the common people. It was Churchill's Fulton strategy at the beginning of the cold war, the meat and drink of John Foster Dulles' "massive retaliation" and now glorified as "the deterrent" by trigger-happy Yank commanders, glib Macmillan and Gaitskell.

Oddly enough, Lindemann seems to have grasped that the German V1 buzz bombs could not cause mass civilian deaths on a scale to win the war. In fact, 8,564 were launched from their platforms all converging on London in the eighty days after June 13th, 1944, causing 6,184 civilian deaths, or seventy deaths for each 100 launchings.

Lindemann was wrong about rockets, discounting reports that the Germans were preparing large ones.

But von Braun pushed ahead at Peenemunde with the V2, a weapon essentially for the mass killing of civilians. Von Braun produced the prototype of a weapon that can cause truly mass destruction—the ultimate perversion of science—the rocket capable of carrying the nuclear warhead.

War Against Socialism

The political lessons are clear, and relate to the other row between Lindemann and Tizard about the development of radar.

The British ruling class before the war appeased Hitler while preparing for war. The war they prepared for was against the Soviet Union, though Churchill was in conflict with Chamberlain about Hitler. Churchill, seeing the danger to Britain's imperialist interests from a rearmed Germany, wanted to deal with Hitler first. But Chamberlain appeased Hitler, and even when the war started wanted to switch the war to one against the Soviet Union. War preparations went on but there were no serious defence preparations.

Defence strategy was reflected in Baldwin's "the bomber will always get through" excuse for making no air defence preparations. This was continued in Chamberlain's solid refusal to build deep shelters. Instead of realising high explosives were the main danger in air raids, as experts like Professor J. B. S. Haldane warned, and building deep shelters, the great gas-mask farce was played out to try and fool the people that protection was being offered.

The Battle of Britain was won because a radar chain was ready just in time to help the small fighter force—the famous "Few". Lindemann opposed radar research, preferring some crazy gadgets of his own and fought against Tizard, who saw in radar the one hope of protecting Britain from Hitler's Luftwaffe.

Churchill, before the war, insisted on a place on Tizard's Committee (for the promotion of radar) for Lindemann. The battle on the committee was only resolved when the committee was reformed without Lindemann and went ahead to promote the development of radar. Professor Blackett wrote in the *Scientific American* on April 1st this year:

"There is no doubt that Tizard must be given a major part of the credit, and Lindemann none, for the radar chain . . . without it the Battle of Britain in 1940—a near thing at best—might have been lost, with incalculable historical consequences."

Snow's lectures were to an American audience, and his theme is that Britain made major scientific and technical mistakes and that he wishes the Americans to avoid the same mistakes when now faced with similar decisions.

His "cautionary tale" about Tizard and Lindemann shows where one ultra-reactionary scientist like Lindemann can lead a Cabinet. Surely similar conclusions can be drawn immediately from the malevolent influence of the bitterly anti-Communist Hungarian-born Edward Teller (the U.S.-styled "father of the H-bomb") and of von Braun, firstly on German rocket research and secondly on U.S. space research?

Snow's appeal to scientists, explicitly stated to the American Association for the Advancement of Science this year, is: "question and, if necessary, rebel . . . for scientists have a moral imperative to say what they know.

"When you think of the long gloomy history of man you will find far more and far more hideous crimes have been committed in the name of obedience than have ever been committed in the name of rebellion."

Snow's plea for trained scientists at all levels of government is aimed at the West and particularly at Britain and the United States. A ruling class which had a Prime Minister who grasped nothing

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of the enormity of the first atom bomb can easily produce an Aviation Minister to waste £70 million on one project like Blue Streak.

The present Conservative Cabinet is the first to have a Minister for Science, but since there is no Ministry, the set-up is really a sham. The Minister, Lord Hailsham, hardly misses an opportunity to advertise his ignorance of science and scientists. This barrister's background of Eton and Christ Church, Oxford, does nothing to qualify him for the job.

In the Commons, his spokesman is stockbroker Denzil Freeth (Shelborne and Trinity Hall, Cambridge), whose recreations are listed as amateur theatricals, good food, wine and conversation. His scientific qualifications are nil.

The Labour Party does better, with Tom Peart, the M.P. for Workington, who got a B.Sc. at Durham University, as its shadow spokesman on science.

But the Labour Party does not demonstrate any great or continuous interest in science or its application. Technical changes in industry, including the development of automation and electronics, the use of atomic energy and isotopes, have passed almost without comment from the Shadow Cabinet, Labour Party Executive and General Council of the Trades Union Congress.

Trained Scientists

Only some unions, intimately affected by these changes, have faced the new situation developing with the new technological revolution.

The Labour Party recently produced a discussion statement on science—*Science and the Future of Britain*— of uneven quality and marred by a reference at the beginning to a sputnik orbiting the earth hourly—an impossible feat.

The position of the Government and the Opposition bears out a recent remark of Professor Bernal—"the higher you go in society, the smaller the proportion of scientists".

Contrast this with the position in what Snow calls a "future-directed society"—the Soviet Union. Not only are there more scientists and engineers in proportion to population than in Britain, but an even higher proportion is being trained. There are ample numbers teaching at schools and higher institutions, to keep up and expand the flow, and qualified men are found everywhere in Soviet society.

The top scientific men write in the national press and appear on radio and TV to explain achievements in a popular, not vulgarised, way.

According to the former Minister of Supply, Aubrey Jones, in 1960, thirty-nine out of the sixty-seven members of the Soviet Presidium have had a scientific or technological training. He wrote in the *Sunday Times*: " . . . those who have not cannot escape the influence of the prevailing form of education. As a result, scientific and technological projects command a readier passage through the higher echelons of government than in the West."

Snow puts the proportion of men with scientific or technological training in top Soviet executive organs or among high-ranking diplomats as 35 to 40 per cent, much higher than for the United States or Britain. Snow is provocative because he stops short of the conclusion that only the "future-directed" socialist system of society uses science for all its people and promotes science and scientists at every level.

But he is critical of the West and writes: "We are beginning to shrug off our sense of the future. This is true all over the West. True, even in the United States, though to a lesser extent than in the old societies of Western Europe. We are becoming existential societies—and we are living in the same world with future-directed societies" (*Science and Government*, p. 80).

Snow wants scientists in government because they may have foresight. Not that all scientists have this quality, but:

"Scientists have it within them to know what a future-directed society feels like, for science itself, in its human aspect, is just that" (p. 82).

But a sprinkling of reactionary scientists added to reactionary politicians in Cabinets would solve nothing.

The use of science in government for the benefit of the people and society depends on having a social system that is constructed to use science in that way.

There is no doubt that this is the position in the Soviet Union and that one immediately visible consequence is Soviet supremacy in space travel. But there is also supremacy in preventive medicine and a number of other fields, apart from the obvious one of education.

Snow agrees that the collective influence of a greater number of scientifically trained men at the top of Soviet society has led to plenty of better choices being taken. That the situation is the reverse in the West stands out starkly from Snow's elegant and, at first sight, dispassionate posing of the problem.

The conclusion that, faced with "cardinal choices" today, the British Cabinet is just as wrong as it was in 1942, is inescapable.

A great series of wrong, and in the first place secret, decisions about nuclear strategy, U.S. bases, including Polaris, re-arming of Western Germany and training German troops in Britain, have been taken. They add up to a threat of thermo-nuclear war, in which Britain would be among the most vulnerable countries in the

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world. For Britain to be a party to such a war would be, literally, national suicide. If the results of "closed politics" are more frightening now than before the war, the resistance to the policies it results in is also greater.

Against the results of nuclear strategy stands an ever-growing peace movement which, on a world scale, is capable of preventing the holocaust. Leaving out the decisive force—the people—seems the serious weakness in Snow's case. True, he wants scientists in government, because this would be bound to increase the number influencing secret choices. But he does not enter in his account the fact that, outside times of war, even though terrible secret decisions are made, the people can learn enough of government policy to know if it is right or wrong. And, if wrong, the people can organise and demonstrate in their thousands to change government policy.

Further, they can change the system of society. It is the masses that do it, not the scientists, although many of them become supporters, not just of rebellion but of revolution.

Snow quotes the most famous open vote of the century: that in the central committee of the Bolsheviks in 1917 for the seizure of power. That vote could never have become reality and power taken into the people's hands unless the workers of Petrograd and Moscow were ready with arms in their hands to carry it out. They were then a small minority in the world. Now, because they did take power then, their cause has triumphed over one-third of the world's surface.

Socialist society, already triumphant politically and scientifically, will soon outstrip the capitalist world economically. All this has a direct bearing on Snow's argument, because, as socialism advances, the secret decisions of capitalist Cabinets, while dangerous, even doubly dangerous, can be frustrated; not so much by scientists, but because the power of the people will prove the stronger.

James Connolly

George Jeffares

CONNOLLY was misrepresented and misunderstood during his lifetime; his very death before a British firing squad in 1916 became grounds for a further distortion of his life and teaching. Much has been written about Ireland's great Socialist martyr, but nothing so authoritative as this book by Desmond Greaves, who rescues Connolly not only from those who hate socialism, but from some whose only lament to this day is that James Connolly "abandoned socialism for nationalism". That he has done so to such effect is largely due to his insistence on assessing Connolly against the background of events, of which he was as much the product as the instigator. In this light, and in spite of all those shortcomings which Desmond Greaves hastens to point out, Connolly emerges as one of the most outstanding and gifted revolutionary socialists of his day. He "engraved socialism indelibly on the national life of Ireland", but because this book is concerned with the period as much as with the man, its importance extends beyond Ireland and Irish socialism to all places and movements where James Connolly left his mark during the period of the Second International.

On the whole this is a very readable book, thanks to the author having managed to weave into one story the various stages in the development of international and Irish socialism and of Connolly's own ideas, and in the process showing us what the *man* Connolly was like—not merely the political leader, but also the cobbler whose customers could never again wear the shoes he had repaired! Greaves's capacity for the most painstaking research is remarkable, thanks to which he can fully document his theories about Connolly's birth in Edinburgh and his service in the King's Liverpool Regiment—although neither point seems important enough to justify the space allotted to it, which considerably slows up the narrative at this stage.

Connolly played a major role in building the Marxist movement in Scotland at a time when "the hitherto accepted pillars of society, the landlord and the industrialist, gave way before the investor". These were years of a growing alliance between British socialism and Irish nationalism; the break-up of this alliance was one fruit of the Parnell split, and Connolly deplored the new Home Rule-Liberal alliance which replaced it. Now "the British Labour movement had begun to desert the Irish movement".

Connolly founded the Irish Socialist Republican Party in Dublin in 1896, when Irish socialism was in its doldrums, limited to trade union politics, and leaving both the national and agrarian questions to the nationalists. Connolly now showed how in the new era of finance capital the Irish question had a twofold character, that the two currents of revolutionary thought in Ireland, the socialist and the national, "were not antagonistic but complementary,

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and that the Irish socialist was in reality the best patriot".

His first great victory was the spectacular demonstration against Victoria's Jubilee, whereby "the myth of loyal Dublin was destroyed". The I.S.R.P. now "entered its great days", the opposition it led to the Boer War halting all recruitment in Ireland, in spite of growing unemployment. The party's "toughness and ability to react to situations", despite a membership of less than a hundred, is attributed by Desmond Greaves to its constant attention to Marxist education. The scope of its activities, and the reasons for its failure, are fully analysed. The I.S.R.P. stood firmly for revolution against reform. At the International Socialist Congress in Paris in 1900, only Ireland and Bulgaria voted unanimously against Kautsky. Rosa Luxemburg's ultra-left opposition to Kautsky, in the course of which she objected to Poland being considered a separate nation, was "widely accepted as the 'revolutionary' answer to the 'reformism' of nationalism, a judgment which Connolly had to combat again and again." (He was up against other things too at this time—"At Christmas he brought home 2/-. The family had no Christmas dinner and no presents").

By 1901 Connolly had broken off all political association with Keir Hardie, who was making increased efforts to conciliate Home Rulers and Liberals, whereas Connolly sought "the discomfiture" of those parties. To this end he undertook his anti-Kautsky lecture tour of England. This was a time when under the influence of De Leon in America, the fight against opportunism was not without its excesses, as Greaves puts it: "the ultra-leftism in the American Socialist Labour Party linked itself with the dogmatic tradition of the British Social Democratic Federation". Connolly, however, was never one to identify himself with the refusal to fight for reforms—in Aberdeen one of his speeches was devoted to urging that the trams be run on Sundays. Here the author gives an interesting account of the origins of the Socialist Labour Party in Scotland as a breakaway from the S.D.F., to follow the lines of De Leon's S.L.P., whose name it was urged to adopt by Connolly, just back from his first American visit.

The Struggle Against Opportunism

Whereas in Ireland at this time, Connolly failed in his efforts to bring about a lasting mass movement, due, as Greaves points out, to the objective conditions not having matured, "the key to Connolly's contribution at this period was the struggle against opportunism, without which no development was possible".

Connolly's differences with De Leon on wages, religion, etc., are dealt with against the background of the specific form of development of the U.S.A., with its vast aristocracy of labour headed by the A.F.L., and the rise of the S.L.P. against it. Connolly's role as a founder and organiser of the I.W.W., his unceasing struggle to bring about unity between the S.L.P. and the S.P., and the importance of all this for his future work in Ireland is thoroughly dealt with—if at too great length. We see how because of his unclarity on the question of the state, Connolly was unable to criticise De Leon's errors from a theoretical standpoint, proposing that their differences, instead of being clarified, should be submerged. At this time, too, he was still capable of drawing syndicalist conclusions from the Communist Manifesto, nor did he understand the political party as the leader of a class.

Just as Connolly denied the right of the clergy to claim religious justification for attacks on socialism, he would brook no attempts to quote religion in its defence. His *Labour, Nationality and Religion*, written in reply to a Jesuit priest's *Lenten Lectures Against Socialism*, remains to this day a model of simple, clear and popular advocacy of socialist ideas. Desmond Greaves offers an interesting Marxist analysis of Connolly's major work, *Labour in Irish History*, a re-writing of Irish history from the standpoint of the working people, showing the influence of economics on Irish history, and demonstrating beyond any doubt that the Irish question was a social one.

When we remember that today British official Labour stands four square behind the Partition of Ireland, we realise that there are many who have yet to learn the lessons of the last sixty years, which emerge very forcefully from this book. Connolly saw clearly that unless the British workers took the initiative in dissolving the Union between England and Ireland, then, as Marx said, "the English people, in league with their rulers against the Irish, would be for ever dependent on them". To Connolly, the I.L.P. was "scarcely distinguishable from imperialism, the merging of subjugated peoples in the political system of their conquerors". Desmond Greaves shows how this social-Chauvinism had left the workers of Belfast ideologically disarmed in face of Carson's counter-offensive against the proposed Home Rule, and provides an invaluable account of the historical roots of religious sectarianism in that city, as well as of Connolly's no small success in overcoming it and uniting Protestant with Catholic worker. The Unionists had to split the working class before they could organise the Ulster Volunteers, and were helped in this because the leadership of the Nationalists would not join with the forces of Labour, as "the aim of the Home Rulers was to make Home Rule cheap rule". The nationalist workers were divided, and "instead of Carson's army being divided along class lines, it was the working class who were split along religious lines". Throughout, the British Labour Party maintained its uncritical support of the Nationalists, while

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their Liberal allies, as Lenin said, were "capable only of cringing before the Carsons".

The description of the 1913 Dublin lock-out—surely one of the great struggles in international working-class history—makes exciting, if sadly instructive, reading. The breaking of the sympathetic strikes and boycott in Britain by J. H. Thomas and Arthur Henderson (later to become a member of the War Cabinet which ordered Connolly's execution) had its roots in the old Liberal-Labour alliance, and was seen by Connolly as "an aspect of the parliamentary opportunism of British Labour". The limited response to Connolly's Manifesto to the British Working Class, appealing to them over the heads of their leaders for sympathetic action, cost the British workers dearly. When the Nationalists accepted Asquith's amendment to the Home Rule Bill, thus making Partition a certainty, Connolly appealed in vain to British Labour to wreck the Bill. Ireland, says Greaves, having been betrayed industrially at the time of the lock-out, was now betrayed politically. An embittered Connolly wrote in *Forward:* "I cannot this May Day felicitate you or the working class of the world in general upon the spread of working class solidarity". Henceforth he was "above all determined to end the dependence of uncorrupted Ireland upon corrupted England". The imperialist war was to be his opportunity.

The First World War

But Connolly's attitude to the war was that of a thorough-going international socialist. He wrote: "Should the working class of Europe, rather than slaughter each other for the benefit of kings and financiers, proceed tomorrow to erect barricades all over Europe, to break up bridges and destroy the transport service that war might be abolished, we should be perfectly justified in following such a glorious example, and contributing our aid to the final dethronement of the vulture classes that rule and rob the world." His aim was a socialist Europe, and alone among the European parties the Russians and Serbs took the same stand. It was Connolly's major contribution to Marxist theory that, seeing the Irish movement for independence as a factor, *in its own right*, making for the downfall of capitalism, he was the first socialist in Western Europe to see that in the era of imperialism the world socialist revolution would take the form of the united struggles for socialism and national independence. Ireland was to kindle the blaze.

Desmond Greaves does a good job of showing the class origins of the different tactics of Connolly and the Irish Republican Brotherhood. At the height of the armed preparations we see Connolly up to his eyes in the wages struggle, fighting on all fronts against the war as a whole and all its separate consequences—the special war budget, recruitment, threatened conscription, as well as against the enemies of the working class high up in the leadership of the Volunteers. These are points worth making—"so much for the leadership of a man who is accused of becoming a pure nationalist". For Connolly, a strong working class was an essential in the struggle for national independence.

The preparations for the Rising, the alleged kidnapping of Connolly, the Proclamation of the Republic being printed in Liberty Hall on the same machine that printed the *Workers' Republic*—all this makes stirring reading. Even more so is the day-by-day account of Easter Week 1916 in Dublin, "the most mature revolutionary centre in the Western world". For the benefit of those socialists—and they were many—who could not understand Connolly having taken part in the Rising, Lenin wrote: "Whoever expects a 'pure' social revolution will never live to see it . . . the misfortune of the Irish was that they rose prematurely, when the European revolt of the proletariat had not yet matured."

Connolly's great contribution to Irish history was his juxtaposition of socialism and national independence. In the world movement, he stood for all that was best in the revolutionary wing of the International, a great militant who fought reformism tooth and nail.

In the epilogue to his book, Desmond Greaves projects perspectives for the Ireland of today. His views and conclusions on the way forward for the Irish working class, while interesting and thought-provoking, will be disputed by many. But he merits our unreserved gratitude for having provided us with the most complete book on Connolly.

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Reply to Discussion

On the "New Left"

Arnold Kettle

THE discussion-contributions on my article "How New is the 'New Left'?" (October 1960) have been useful in making one reconsider a number of the formulations in that article. If I were to rewrite it now, making a fresh start but with the benefit of further thought and discussion, I would want to draw a sharper distinction than I think I did between the important thing—a significant and encouraging strengthening of left opinion in the trade unions and Labour Party and among intellectuals, students and other young people—and the relatively minor phenomenon, the "New Left" grouping around the *New Left Review*, which is one aspect of that general movement and, in my judgment, a decreasingly significant one.

Now the important thing about the growing left impulse in general is not whether it is "new" or not. In one sense it obviously is; it didn't exist with anything like the same strength ten, five or even two years ago. There has been a very significant left development in the trade unions, with its impact on the Labour Party; the peace movement now involves far larger numbers in activity, especially young people through the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the fight against the Polaris base; the anti-apartheid movement and the movement for colonial freedom find a constantly increasing response; and all this is reflected in the ideological field by a rising demand for the Marxist classics and for the discussion of Marxist ideas.

Why should there have been this resurgence of left opinion during the last few years? I should have thought the underlying reason was pretty clear: the steady strengthening of the progressive forces, the socialist system and the national-liberation movements, in the world as a whole is gradually leading more people in this country to see the world in a different way and to have more confidence than they had, say, ten years ago in the possibility of effectively preventing nuclear war and ending colonialism. Progressive people have always wanted these things, but at the height of the cold war and in the light of the failure of the post-war Labour governments, it was hard for them to see how their hopes could be realised and, as a result, the hopes themselves became dimmer and fewer people helped them. Today, especially I think through the experience of such crises as Suez, Algeria, Congo, South Africa and Cuba and because of the gradual realisation of the strength and achievements (particularly in science and education) of the Soviet Union, there is a growing—though, as yet, by no means fully conscious—appreciation of the way the world is going, of the truly revolutionary nature of our time. And through beginning to see the world in a new way many people (especially the younger ones) are beginning to see Britain and British capitalism in a new way and to grow increasingly impatient of the glib right-wing attitudes to almost everything from H-bombs to hereditary peerages. This is what the strengthening of the left means, and, although the particular crises and events which give rise to it are, of course, new, the general tendencies and ideas involved are not new at all.

Essence of the Left

The left is what it has always been, the movement for progressive social change, for the prevention of war through the power and unity of the people, for the replacement of capitalism by socialism. There can be no other basis for the left. And any upsurge of the left involves in the very nature of things the movement of its most consistent adherents towards the Communist Party.

The "New Left" grouping is a part of the left which came into existence as a result of the particular problems of 1956, the revelations about Stalin and the developments in Hungary, which in many parts of the world gave a stimulus to "revisionist" ideas, especially among Marxist intellectuals. The original basis of *The New Reasoner* was quite explicitly revisionist Marxism—communist *élan* minus the discipline of the Party, solidarity with the international Communist movement and the dictatorship of the proletariat: socialism without tears or embarrassments for hearts at peace under an English heaven. At the time it may have seemed new, but to turn over the pages of *The New Reasoner* today is to be carried back merely into a rather quaint (though historically interesting) little backwater of the past. Obviously, one can see *why* these ideas at that time had an attraction; one can also see why communists could not possibly welcome them. But the interesting thing, as most communists foresaw, is that revisionist Marxism is too flimsy and untenable a basis to support any movement for long, and the "New Left" has in fact changed its nature considerably. Within the clubs and groups sponsored by the grouping diverse tendencies are to be found, including often a majority feeling their way towards

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a Marxist position; while, on the other side, the last two numbers of the *New Left Review* are almost indistinguishable from half a dozen other leftish cultural journals emanating from university and artistic circles which you can buy nowadays in Charing Cross Road. Communists welcome the existence of the outcrop of left feeling in these circles, even if its positive political content is often slight, for it means that people are stirring, who not long ago were acquiescent; and we shall naturally do all we can to find points of contact and unity with such people, both for action and discussion.

One of the main implications of Ralph Russell's contribution (January 1961) is that Communists should be self-critical about their attitude to other sections of the intellectual left. I do not disagree with this in the sense that, looking back over the last five years, one recognises mistakes which could, with greater wisdom and experience, have been avoided. But the *principal* problem facing Communist Party intellectuals as a result of 1956 was not how to establish friendly relations with the revisionists (though obviously the friendliest possible relations were most desirable), but to discover how it was that the revisionist concepts had made such deep inroads into the thinking of so many of us, including those who remained loyal to the Party. *That* was the essential basis for any self-criticism and for any fruitful consideration of our relations with the rest of the intellectual left. I am not convinced that Ralph Russell, to judge from his contribution to the discussion, has faced that problem squarely. If he had, I think, he would recognise that the chief weakness among Communist intellectuals in the last few years has not been lack of self-criticism but lack of self-confidence, a failure to recognise that what an increasing number of progressive intellectuals and students is waiting for is precisely what Marxism and the Communist Party has to offer.

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Collet's Column—No. 5

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